

KANSAS RIVER VALLEY: CORRIDOR OF INFLUENCE

“Rivers are both byways and barriers.

To understand history, first understand rivers.”

First, there were the natives and the explorers.

For half a century before 1803, when the land west of the Mississippi was the domain of France or Spain, traders and trappers, most of them of French birth or extraction, had been visiting and exploring the area. The Chouteau family, co-founders of St. Louis, and its associates were among the most active participants, carrying on after the Louisiana Purchase and assisting Lewis and Clark and other explorers.¹

Around the time Lewis and Clark were returning from the Pacific, Zebulon Pike and his exploration party explored the Kansas River basin in 1806, reaching the Smoky Hill via the Osage and the upper reaches of the Neosho and the Verdigris. The party traveled northwest across the lower Saline and Solomon, eventually arriving at a Pawnee village near the Republican. Then they headed southwest to the valley of the Arkansas, crossing the Solomon, Saline and Smoky Hill farther upstream from the earlier crossings.²

Stephen H. Long and his party explored the area west of the Missouri in 1819 and 1820. They ascended the Missouri on an early steamboat, the *Western Engineer*. An attempt to steam up the lower Kaw was given up after about a mile. In 1819 a detachment rode through the Kaw valley south of the river, crossed the river, and visited a Kansa village on the east side of the Big Blue. After having lost most of their horses this detachment headed east through the areas north of the Kaw and eventually rejoined the main party at the juncture of the Wolf River and the Missouri. This exploration of the Kaw Valley was recorded by the expedition zoologist, Professor Thomas Say.³

Then there were the emigrants.

In the 1820s, the Kansa and other indigenous tribes and the relatively transient trappers, traders and explorers were joined by more permanent arrivals. After Mexico established its independence from Spain, the Santa Fe Trail was opened for two-way trade in 1821. Originating at various points in Missouri, the trail crossed a few tributaries of the lower Kaw on its way to the ridge between the Wakarusa and left-bank tributaries of the Marais des Cygnes. Most of the mileage of the trail was though the basin of the Arkansas.⁴

Treaties between the United States and several native tribes in the 1820s and later years resulted in establishment of reservations in the Kaw valley and other areas west of Missouri the emigration of various tribes to the area from Missouri and the states of the Old Northwest. Tribes which moved to the Kansas River valley from the east included the Delaware, with a reservation in the valley of Stranger-Little Stranger Creeks, and the Shawnee, to a reservation on the south side of the river.⁵

Government farmers, blacksmiths and interpreters were engaged to assist them. If they had the requisite skills, Native Americans or mixed-bloods could and would be hired as blacksmiths or interpreters. Soon white missionaries of the Catholic, Methodist, Baptist, and other denominations arrived to attend to their spiritual and educational needs.⁶

Pursuant to a treaty signed in 1825, the Kansa tribe accepted a diminished reservation, on both sides of the Kaw a few miles upstream from the mouths of Soldier and Shunganunga Creeks. Twenty-three individuals of mixed Kansa and French or other Euro-American or, in at least one instance, African-American, descent were granted square-mile tracts on the north bank of the Kaw downstream from the eastern boundary of the Kansa reservation. The United States also agreed to pay a debt in the amount of \$500 owed by the Kansa tribe to Francis G. Chouteau.⁷

By the second decade of the 19th Century, Francis and Cerre Chouteau had established a trading post on the north bank of the Kaw about 20 miles upstream from its junction with the Missouri. By 1820, this location was referred to as the "Four Houses," because it consisted of four buildings around a central square or court. The buildings may have been built over a period of several years.⁸

Probably as early as 1825, and certainly by 1828, Francis Chouteau and his brother Cyprien had moved their trading operation downstream to a new site, on the south side of a bend in the river around seven miles upstream from the mouth of the Kaw. This was to facilitate trading with the Delaware and the Shawnee. By this time, their younger brother Frederick was in his late teens and working in the business.⁹

The brothers brought trade goods up the Kaw by pirogue in the late summer and took peltries down in the spring. Pirogues were made of two tall cottonwood trees with thick trunks, hollowed out like a canoe, and placed side by side and fastened securely together. A pirogue was 60 to 70 feet long, and could carry ten to 15 tons of cargo. In 1828, the Chouteaus brought the first keelboat up the Kaw. A keelboat was capable of transporting 40 to 50 tons of cargo, compared to ten to 15 tons for a pirogue.¹⁰

Another trading house is reported to have been built by the Chouteaus on the south side of the Kansas River, about a mile upstream from the mouth of Mill Creek, probably to better facilitate trading with the Shawnees. Frederick Chouteau had a succession of at least four wives; the first three were part Shawnee. His son, William M. Chouteau, was born at this trading post in 1833.¹¹

The Chouteaus also operated a ferry at this location. After Francis Chouteau had died in 1838, his brothers continued to carry on the business. Operations were disrupted by the Flood of 1844. The trading post and residences were relocated to higher ground nearby. In the early 1850s, Cyprien Chouteau married a woman of part-Shawnee ancestry.¹²

In 1827, the future Fort Leavenworth was established as Cantonment Leavenworth on a bluff on the west bank of the Missouri a few miles upstream from the mouth of the Kaw. The post and its environs were drained by minor right-bank tributaries of the Missouri, but the site was a few miles east of Stranger and Little Stranger Creeks and a few miles farther north of the main stem of the Kaw.¹³

Moses Grinter, who had arrived at Fort Leavenworth as a soldier in 1828, was engaged in 1831 to establish and operate a ferry for military and other traffic across the Kaw south of the post and a few miles upstream from the mouth of the river. The ferry was near a Delaware village on the north bank. Moses Grinter married a tribe member who had been born in Ohio as the daughter of a white trader and Delaware woman.¹⁴

Around age 20, Frederick Chouteau established his own trading operation at Horseshoe Lake, on the south bank of the Kaw and downstream from the mouth of the Grasshopper, the tracts granted to mixed-bloods by the Treaty of 1825, and the Kaw agency of the time. A year or two later, he moved to Mission Creek near two of the three relocated Kaw villages, and across the river and upstream from the third. He may have migrated seasonally between the Mission Creek post and his brother Cyprien's post downstream near the Shawnee reservation.¹⁵

Mission Creek derived its name from a Methodist mission to the Kansa carried on by Rev. William Johnson. William Johnson was a brother of Rev. Thomas Johnson, who had established a Methodist mission to the Shawnee, first near the Kaw River and the Chouteau trading house on the south side of the river, and later some miles to the southeast and nearer to the Missouri line and the town of Westport.¹⁶

In 1837, part of the Potawatomi tribe moved to a reserve in the valley of the Marais des Cygnes, and in 1847 they relocated to former Kansa lands north of the Kansas River. In 1843, the Wyandot tribe purchased land from the Delaware including the ridge between the Missouri and the lower reaches of the Kaw.¹⁷

Due to their proximity to and intermarriage with white people, most of these tribes included members of mixed ancestry and those who were white and adopted into the tribe, most often white husbands of native women. On the frontier, there was greater acceptance of mixed marriages. Also, the employment market was more fluid, for those who had needed skills, a good work ethic, and a willingness to live and work in a frontier environment. Multiple races and cultures were involved.¹⁸

For example, Manuel Lisa, the most formidable competitor of the Chouteaus, was born in New Orleans to Spanish parents. He was married to a Euro-American woman in St. Louis, and had a "country marriage" to the daughter of an Omaha Chief.¹⁹

James Beckwourth was the best-known of several mountain men of African ancestry. He was the son of an Irish father and a mulatto mother. In the early 1900s, a Kansas historian commented that: "Beckwourth was often in Kansas. . . . He hunted, trapped and traded on the Kansas and the Arkansas." A dictated account of his adventures, published in 1858, included some of his tall tales. Beckwourth was a master of this genre, used for entertainment around the campfire. Some historians, lacking a sense of humor, felt called to debunk them.²⁰

Frederick Chouteau told of brothers Baptiste and Frank Zabelle Datcherute, mulattos who worked as keelboat pilots for the Chouteaus and other fur trading concerns. Baptiste Datcherute came upriver from St. Louis as a free man. He married a Kaw woman, and their daughter Elizabeth received

Tract No. 15 in the Treaty of 1825. Frederick Chouteau referred to Baptiste Datcherute as an “old rascal,” but when Datcherute was dying of tuberculosis, Chouteau furnished him with a place to stay.²¹

Joseph Lulu was a mulatto owned by the father of the Chouteau brothers. Lulu requested and was granted his freedom on the grounds that he was of partial Native American ancestry on his mother’s side. Referring to an incident in which a keelboat loaded with furs sank, and Lulu salvaged the cargo by diving for it, one pelt at a time, Frederick Chouteau said Lulu was “worth his weight in gold.” Lulu worked as cook for Chouteau at his Horseshoe Lake trading post, then became a fireman on steamboats on the Mississippi.²²

More trails are opened, with ferries and bridges to serve them.

Around 1840, emigration of settlers to the Oregon country was increasing. The principal route at this time was to follow the Santa Trail a few miles west of Missouri, then branch off to the northwest to the Kaw Valley, cross the Wakarusa, ascend the ridge on the south side of the river, cross Shunganunga Creek and then the Kansas River.²³

North of the river, the trail was on or near the floodplain. After crossing of the Red Vermillion at a ford, the trail turned northwest and crossed the Black Vermillion and then Big Blue near Alcove Spring. Then it followed the valley of the Little Blue for a considerable distance before crossing a ridge to the valley of the Platte.²⁴

The Papan brothers arrived in the area between the Kansas River and Soldier Creek in 1840. Three of the four Papan brothers were married to daughters of Louis Gonville. The Gonville sisters were granddaughters of White Plume, the Kansa chief who had negotiated the Treaty of 1825 with William Clark. White Plume wanted to assure that his grandchildren and other Kansas of mixed ancestry would have their own properties separate from the politics of communal land ownership.²⁵

Possibly noting the increase in traffic, the Papan brothers established a ferry in 1842 a short distance upstream from the mouth of Soldier Creek. The four Gonville sisters had received adjoining tracts on the north side of the river, thus assuring the Papan brothers of a monopoly on ferry service in the area.²⁶

John C. Fremont and his exploration party came through around the time the Papans were establishing their ferry. The group, including Christopher Carson as guide and Lucien Maxwell as hunter, had outfitted at Cyprian Chouteau’s trading house.²⁷

They brought with them a rubber boat, which capsized while they were using it to cross the Kaw. While they did not use the Papan Ferry, Fremont bought some much-needed coffee from one of the Papan brothers.²⁸

This was the first of five Fremont expeditions into the West. Fremont and his party went on up the Oregon Trail. An expert cartographer in the party prepared maps of the Trail, which were published

and widely disseminated upon their return. While Fremont did not discover South Pass, the reports from his expedition did much to encourage emigration to the Northwest.²⁹

In 1843, Fort Scott was established in a few miles west of the Missouri line and over 100 miles south of Fort Leavenworth. The site of Fort Scott was near the Marmaton River, a tributary of the Marais des Cygnes-Osage system. A Fort Leavenworth-Fort Scott Military Road was built to connect the two posts, and its route was laid out to cross the Kansas River at the Grinter Ferry.³⁰

This Fort Leavenworth-Fort Scott road was one segment of a longer road from Fort Snelling at the juncture of the Mississippi and Minnesota Rivers to Fort Jesup in western Louisiana. Generally this road was the demarcation line between the area of white settlement and Indian territory, and the posts were established to protect the native Americans and their lands from settler encroachment.³¹

Also in 1843, Fremont came through on his second expedition. This time, the party fitted out at Westport, Missouri. Thomas Fitzpatrick was guide, and Lucien Maxwell once again was the hunter. This time, the party went up the Kaw to Fort Riley, then took off to the northwest. They met up with Christopher Carson later in the trip.³²

Early explorers had noted the relatively arid character of the area drained by the Republican and Smoky Hill. Experience revealed that, in addition to declining amounts of average annual rainfall from east to west (over 30 inches in the lower Kaw valley, between 20 and 30 inches along the lower Smoky Hill and Republican, and less than 20 inches on the High Plains), there were also fluctuations from month to month and year to year. In 1844, the Kansas River valley experienced a bluff to bluff flood. Among other damage, this flood put the Papan ferry out of business. The brothers moved to the mouth of the Kaw, then returned in 1846 to reestablish their ferry.³³

Sometime in the mid-1840s, probably shortly after the 1844 flood, the Wyandotte tribe established a ferry a short distance above the mouth of the Kaw. During the next decade, until the ferry was sold in 1856, problems, such as unreliability of ferrymen and the ferry being washed downstream, were regular concerns of the tribal leadership.³⁴

In the spring of 1845, John C. Fremont came through on his third expedition. This time the followed the Smoky Hill, then crossed over to the valley of the Arkansas. The party had a difficult time in the mountains, and the survivors arrived at Sutter's Fort on December 1, 1845. The War with Mexico was within a few month of breaking out, and Fremont's expedition to California had an unwritten military agenda, as well as the formal one of exploration.³⁵

On May 18, 1845, Colonel Stephen Watts Kearny, accompanied by guide Thomas Fitzpatrick, led five companies of the First U.S. Dragoons out of Fort Leavenworth. They intercepted the Oregon Trail in the valley of the Platte and rode on to the Rocky Mountains. They then rode south and intercepted the Santa Fe Trail in the valley of the Arkansas, and were back at Fort Leavenworth ninety-nine days after their departure. Details are somewhat sketchy, but they are believed to have left the Santa Fe Trail and crossed the Kaw via a ferry operated by Paschal Fish, a sometime chief of the Shawnee, tribe at the mouth of the Wakarusa.³⁶

On May 12, 1846, the Donner-Reed Party left Independence, Missouri on its way to California. Led by George Donner, farmer, and James F. Reed, businessman, both of Illinois, they followed the Oregon-California Trail through the Kaw Valley. On May 19, they crossed the Kansas River on boat manned by French-Indian ferrymen. The charge was \$1 per wagon. On the other side, they met with a larger party led by William Russell camped at Soldier Creek.³⁷

The combined Russell and Donner-Reed party moved out over a flat prairie with wet and boggy sections. They frequently traveled or camped in the rain. They worked for four hours to get their wagons across a steep-banked stream. Later they chopped trees and stacked brush to ford a small creek. Then they needed several hours to cross Vermillion Creek. On May 26, they reached the Big Blue, and found the stream a hundred yards wide and rising by the hour.³⁸

They hauled out dirty clothes and soaked them in the river. They also held a meeting, followed by musical entertainment. On May 29, Sarah Keyes, mother of Mrs. Reed, died and was buried nearby. This was the first death of a member of the party. On May 31, the last of the wagons was ferried across on a makeshift raft, and the combined parties continued on up the Trail through the valley of the Little Blue.³⁹

Later, instead of following the main route of the California Trail, the Donner-Reed Party took an alleged shortcut from Fort Bridger through the Wasatch Mountains, then south of the Great Salt Lake, and across the desert to the Sierra Nevadas. They became trapped by the high snows in the mountains. Many died, and those who survived and were rescued in 1847 experienced a harrowing ordeal.⁴⁰

The experience of the Donner-Reed Party illustrates the point that delay, even of a few days, could make the difference between arriving safe and healthy at the destination or of being trapped in the mountains and facing cold and starvation. This made the tolls at the limited number of ferries and bridges available a wise use of the often limited cash resources of emigrants.⁴¹

War comes to the West; soldiers march through the Kaw Valley.

Around the time the Donner-Reed Party was traveling through Kansas, war between the United States and Mexico was breaking out. Colonel Kearny sent out a fatigue party to break a path to the Fish Ferry across the Kaw, and on to the Santa Fe Trail. After orders came through in late May, Kearny led an expedition, including Missouri volunteers commanded by Colonel Alexander Doniphan, out of Fort Leavenworth in June 1846. It is recorded that part of Doniphan's column crossed the river on the Fish Ferry at the mouth of the Wakarusa.⁴²

At some point, another member of the Shawnee tribe, named Charles Toley (pronounced "Tooley," and sometimes spelled phonetically), established a ferry a few miles upstream from the Grinter Ferry. It is recorded that part of Doniphan's column crossed at Toley's Ferry.⁴³

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints had been founded in 1830. The church had experienced rapid growth in its membership, and persecution by its neighbors, first in Ohio, then in western Missouri, and finally in northwestern Illinois. In 1846, church leadership was preparing for the

first of several migrations to the valley of the Great Salt Lake, with western Iowa, up the Missouri River from the mouth of the Platte, as the jumping-off place.⁴⁴

As it became more and more evident that the United States was going to be in a war with Mexico, a leader of the church contacted President James K. Polk and offered the services of a group of volunteers, to be known as the Mormon Battalion. They would participate in the war effort, and then go on to their new gathering place in the valley of the Great Salt Lake. The offer was accepted, and approximately 500 volunteers, some accompanied by family members, marched south through Iowa and northwest Missouri to Fort Leavenworth.⁴⁵

After receiving minimal training and being issued equipment, the first elements of the Mormon Battalion moved out from Fort Leavenworth on August __, 1846. They followed the path beaten by Kearny and Doniphan and their troops to Nine-Mile Creek south of Fort Leavenworth, then headed southwest to cross Little Stranger and Stranger Creeks on their way to the Fish Ferry over the Kaw. At roughly the same time, Missouri volunteers under Colonel Sterling Price were marching through the area.⁴⁶

South of the Kaw, they moved up the valley of the Wakarusa. Camping near Blue Mound, they experienced a Kansas storm with torrential rain and high winds. They named the location "Hurricane Point." They crossed the Oregon Trail, climbed up onto the ridge separating the Kaw and Wakarusa from the Marais des Cygnes and its left-bank tributaries. They intercepted the Santa Fe Trail at Willow Springs and continued on southwest.⁴⁷

A leading authority states that: "Most of the expedition struck the Santa Fe Trail at Elm Grove or Willow Springs." Willow Springs is southwest of the Fish ferry. Elm Grove is some miles to the east, south of Fort Leavenworth and the Toley Ferry.⁴⁸

A modern account states that: "Kearny's march in fact was strung out over a hundred miles, with various elements released several days apart." Elements may well have been ordered to cross at different points to avoid congestion at the crossings.⁴⁹

After crossing the river and reaching the Santa Fe Trail, Kearny and his men marched down that trail to northern Mexico. James P. Beckwourth was a scout with Kearny, upon reaching Bent's Fort, Kearny prepared dispatches, and sent Beckwourth back to Fort Leavenworth with them. Beckwourth rode alone through country occupied by Comanche and Cheyenne to Council Grove, and then on to Fort Leavenworth to accomplish his mission.⁵⁰

After raising the U.S. flag over Las Vegas (New Mexico) and claiming the Southwest for the United States in August 1846, Kearny and a smaller body of troops went on to California and occupied San Diego in December 1846. Doniphan and his Missouri volunteers rode south into Chihuahua. Other forces under Zachary Taylor and Winfield Scott landed by ship at different points on the Gulf of Mexico and marched inland to defeat the Mexican forces.⁵¹

The addition of territory ceded by Mexico, and the establishment of forts throughout the West increased the importance of trails and stream crossings. The Mormon Battalion did not see much action, but it rendered prodigies of service as such tasks at road-building. Not only were the trails traversed by military personnel, they had to handle the traffic of overland freighting contractors, such as Russell, Majors & Waddell of Lexington, Missouri, transporting tons of goods to keep frontier posts supplied.⁵²

Many members of the Mormon Battalion, and their families, reached San Diego. Then they continued their trek to the valley of the Great Salt Lake. The war ended in 1848, with much of northern Mexico being ceded to the United States.⁵³

Gold was discovered in California in the same year. This led to an increase in traffic on the Oregon Trail route through the Kaw Valley, with the California-bound emigrants branching off to the southwest in what later became southern Idaho. The increase in traffic led to a corresponding increase in business for ferry operators in the Kaw Valley, in particular the Papan. In addition to the ferry across the Kaw, they operated a toll bridge across Shunganunga Creek.⁵⁴

John C. Fremont came through in October 1848. He had been an Army officer, and his first three expeditions had been at the expense of the United States. A dispute over the authority of Fremont and other United States officials in the former Mexican province led to Fremont being arrested, tried, and convicted in a court-martial proceeding. Fremont was given a partial pardon by President James Polk, but he resigned his commission nonetheless. His fourth expedition was a private venture. Fremont and his party ascended the Kaw, crossed to the valley of the Arkansas, and went on to California.⁵⁵

There were other improvements on both sides of the river. A Catholic mission to the Potawatomi was established at St. Marys west of Cross Creek. The Potawatomi also were served by a Baptist mission and school established on the south side of the river, a few miles upstream from the Papan Ferry, in 1847.⁵⁶

In 1847 or 1848, Louis Vieux, a Potawatomi tribe member, moved from a village on the south side of Soldier Creek to an allotment on the north side of the Oregon Trail just east of the Red Vermillion ford. After building a log cabin for himself and his family, he built a bridge across the Red Vermillion and operated it as a toll bridge.⁵⁷

Competition for the Papan emerged upstream on the Kaw. When weather conditions permitted, a ford near Uniontown was one alternative. Uniontown faded after a cholera outbreak in 1849. Also in 1849, Charles Beaubien and Louis Ogee established a ferry at the mouth of Cross Creek. This ferry operated under different ownerships into the 1860s.⁵⁸

In 1852, Sidney W. Smith established a ferry a mile northwest of the Baptist mission which had been established in 1847. The following year, ferries were started near Smith's Ferry by Hiram Wells and John Ogee, and by Joseph and Louis Ogee. These ferries were upstream from the Papan Ferry, and downstream from the mouth of Cross Creek.⁵⁹

Upstream on the Big Blue, Francis J. Marshall, an entrepreneur from Weston, Missouri, had established a ferry near Alcove Spring in 1849. In 1851, Marshall established a second ferry several miles upstream. In addition to the Oregon-California traffic, this ferry served those traveling west from St. Joseph and southwest from Nebraska City, as well as military traffic between Fort Leavenworth and Fort Kearney. Marshall soon added a blacksmith shop and trading house.⁶⁰

Fort Riley was founded as Camp Center in 1853. A Fort Leavenworth-Fort Riley Military Road was opened but, rather than being designed and built from scratch, it tended to follow existing roads and trails, particularly the Oregon Trail from the Soldier Creek crossing at Indianola to the point west of the Red Vermillion crossing where the trail turned northwest. It crossed the Big Blue several miles north of its mouth and also Wildcat Creek.⁶¹

S.D. Dyer was engaged in 1853 to operate a ferry across the Big Blue several miles north of its confluence with the Kaw. Dyer moved his large family from their former home at Fort Scott. A bridge was built in 1854, but it was washed out by high water on the Big Blue in 1855, and ferry operations were resumed.⁶²

Captain John W. Gunnison and his party passed through the Kaw Valley in 1853. They went up the Smoky Hill to the mountains and beyond. Later in 1853, Gunnison and most of his party were massacred by Native Americans in Utah.⁶³

In September 1853, John C. Fremont came through on his fifth expedition, this time searching for a railroad route to the Pacific between the 38th and 39th Parallels. Fremont became too ill to travel, and he sent the rest of the party on ahead, and camped for several days near Burnett's Mound, several miles southwest of the Papan Ferry. He took part of his meals with the wife of Thomas N. Stinson, a settler in the bluffs above the mouth of Shunganunga Creek. She was residing temporarily in the area of Burnett's Mound while a new home was being built for the Stinsons.⁶⁴

Kansas becomes a Territory.

While the early buildings at Fort Riley were under construction, the Kansas-Nebraska Act was signed by President Pierce on May 30, 1854, creating Kansas Territory and opening it to settlement. As created in 1854, Kansas Territory was bounded on the east by the western line of Missouri, on the south by the 37th Parallel, and on the north by the 40th Parallel. Part of the western boundary was the Continental Divide.⁶⁵

The upper Smoky Hill, Arikaree and the South Fork of the Republican were in this western part of Kansas Territory. The junctions of the Arikaree and North Fork, and of the North and South Forks, the left-bank tributaries, and two hundred miles of the main stem of the Republican were north of the 40th Parallel in Nebraska Territory. Notwithstanding lines drawn by Congress, the waters continued to flow from the high plains down to the Kaw Valley as they had for centuries.⁶⁶

A number of the Latter Day Saints had experienced the future Kansas Territory during the trek of the Mormon Battalion in 1846. Steamboat travel entailed such hazards as boiler explosions and spread

of communicable diseases. In 1854, there was a large Mormon encampment at Westport, Missouri, followed by travel up the Kansas River Valley and on to Utah.⁶⁷

People and communities in Kansas Territory tended to define themselves by their position on whether Kansas should enter the Union as a free state or slave state. In addition to the conflict over slavery, there were town-promotion schemes, disputes over land titles, and the question of the rights of the emigrant Indians. Violence which erupted, ostensibly between proslavery and antislavery sympathizers, often involved underlying disputes over property rights.⁶⁸

Early towns in Kansas Territory tended to be founded on rivers, at stream crossings, and near military posts. Those on the Missouri included White Cloud, Elwood, Doniphan, Atchison, Leavenworth, just south of the post, and Quindaro. Wyandotte was founded on the ridge between the Missouri and the lower Kaw.⁶⁹

Towns on the south bank of the Kansas River included the abolitionist town of Lawrence; the proslavery territorial capital of Leecompton; the proslavery town of Tecumseh; and the abolitionist town of Topeka, on the south bank near the Papan ferry. The abolitionist town of Manhattan was founded at the confluence of the Kansas and the Big Blue; Ogden, on the north bank at the east edge of the Fort Riley reservation; and Junction City, at the nearby junction of the Republican and Smoky Hill, and across the Republican from Fort Riley. At Junction City, a ferry owned by Fox Booth was operated by a slave woman, also owned by Booth.⁷⁰

In selecting the sites for these towns, not much heed was paid to Native American reports of a bluff-to-bluff flood in the valley of the Kaw less than a decade before Kansas Territory was created and opened to settlement. Extensive development took place in floodplain areas.⁷¹

Along the Fort Leavenworth-Fort Riley Military Road, Easton was founded at the crossing of Stranger Creek; Ozawkie, at the crossing of the Grasshopper; Indianola, at the crossing of Soldier Creek; Louisville, a short distance west of the Louis Vieux crossing of the Red Vermillion and the divergence of the Oregon Trail and the Fort-to-Fort road; and Juniata near the Dyer ferry over the Big Blue.⁷²

South of the Kansas River, Napoleon B. Blanton came to Kansas Territory from Missouri in September 1854. He built a log house with a chimney on the outside on the west side of the Oregon-California Trail just south of its crossing of the Wakarusa. By March of 1855, Blanton had a bridge across the Wakarusa well underway. He was assisted in this endeavor by James B. Abbott, who came from Massachusetts in October 1854 and took a claim on the east side of the trail a quarter of a mile south of the crossing. Blanton also built a small log store building and sold groceries to neighbors and travelers on the trail. From September 1855 to February 1856, there was a Blanton post office, with N.B. Blanton as postmaster.⁷³

Farther downstream, a Bluejacket Ferry across the Wakarusa was established on an alternate route. Charles Bluejacket, like Paschal Fish, was a sometime chief of the Shawnee tribe. He later was plaintiff in a case involving taxation of property of Native Americans which was resolved by the Supreme Court of the United States.⁷⁴

A store was established at the Bluejacket Crossing by William "Dutch Bill" Greiffenstein, an immigrant from Darmstadt in Germany. By 1869, Greiffenstein moved on to the frontier town of Wichita. There he operated a store, acquired and developed real estate, was elected Mayor of Wichita in 1878, and in 1886 was listed as one of the 100 wealthiest people in Wichita, with \$350,000 in assets.⁷⁵

The first session of the Legislature of Kansas Territory met early in 1855 at the Shawnee Methodist Mission near Westport, Missouri. While it was known as the "Bogus Legislature" to settlers of Free-Soil or abolitionist leanings, and its enactments, many lifted intact from the Missouri statute book of the time as the "Bogus Laws," the 1855 session produced some relatively lasting legislation, in particular the creation of thirty-three counties, most of them in the eastern part of the territory, and also authorizations for roads and ferries.⁷⁶

Many of the early counties had watercourses as part of their boundaries. For example, the Kansas River was the boundary between Leavenworth County on the north and Johnson County on the south. Moving upstream, the river was the northern boundary of Douglas, Shawnee and Richardson Counties and the southern boundary of Jefferson, Calhoun and Riley Counties. The river flowed through parts of Riley and Davis Counties to the junction of the Smoky Hill and Republican in Davis County.⁷⁷

Ferry operator Francis Marshall served in the 1855 Legislature. The tier of counties created between those on the north bank of the Kansas River and the south line of Nebraska Territory included one named Marshall County, containing the confluence of the Big Blue, Little Blue and Black Vermillion. The town founded at the site of the ferry crossing, which became the county seat of Marshall County was named Marysville, in honor of Marshall's wife.⁷⁸

In 1855, there was an encampment at Mormon Grove, northwest of the new town of Atchison, Kansas Territory. The Latter Day Saints found work building the town, and outfitted for their journey west across the upper reaches of the leftbank tributaries of the Kaw and on to Utah.⁷⁹

The Wyandotte tribe sold its ferry in 1856. The purchaser, Isaiah Walker, and another Wyandotte, Silas Armstrong, ended up operating competing ferries at the mouth of the Kaw. Armstrong sued Walker, requesting that he be enjoined from operating his ferry. In one of its early decisions, the Supreme Court of Kansas held that a franchise granted by the Legislature of Kansas Territory in 1855 or thereafter prevailed over any rights of Walker derived from the Wyandotte tribe.⁸⁰

Quindaro, founded as a free-state river port on the Missouri a few miles upstream from the mouth of the Kaw, was a commercial rival of Wyandotte. Both towns established ferries on the Kaw to draw trade from south of the river. Abelard Guthrie was a leading promoter of Quindaro. The town derived its name from the Indian name of Guthrie's Wyandotte wife. In 1857, Guthrie, on behalf of the Quindaro Town Company, contracted with Aaron W. Merrill to operate the ferry. Merrill sued Guthrie for unpaid wages, and was awarded a judgment for \$620.24 by the trial court. Guthrie appealed. The Supreme Court of Kansas reversed and granted Guthrie a new trial. Late in 1867, the case was dismissed, with costs assessed against Merrill.⁸¹

Farther upstream, the Grinter Ferry seemed to be prospering. Moses Grinter built a substantial brick house for his family.⁸²

The action of the 1855 Legislature was not the last word on counties in the Kaw Valley. In 1857, Pottawatomie County was created on the north bank of the river out of parts of Riley and Calhoun Counties. The Big Blue River was the boundary between the diminished Riley County and the new Pottawatomie County to the east.⁸³

In 1859, Wyandotte County was created out of parts of southeastern Leavenworth County and northern Johnson County. The lower reaches of the Kaw now flowed through the new county, although the river continued to be the boundary between southwestern Wyandotte County and Johnson County. Also in 1859, Calhoun County and Richardson County, named after officials of the discredited proslavery territorial government, had their respective names changed to Jackson County and Wabaunsee County.⁸³

Topeka was not centrally located in Shawnee County as created in 1854. In 1860, several miles of southern Jackson (formerly Calhoun) County north of the river were added to Shawnee County. Several miles of southern Shawnee County containing the route of the Santa Fe Trail became northern Osage County. This facilitated Topeka becoming county seat of Shawnee County. The river continued to be the boundary between Shawnee County and southwestern Jefferson County, and also between the new northwestern Shawnee County and northeastern Wabaunsee (formerly Richardson) County.⁸⁴

After statehood, a few square miles of southeastern Jefferson County containing north Lawrence and its environs were transferred to Douglas County. Over a period of decades new counties were created in the watersheds of the Smoky Hill and Republican in north central and northwest Kansas, and also in the watershed of the Arkansas in south central and southwest Kansas. As this process was in its final stages in 1889, the name of Davis County was changed to Geary County.⁸⁵

The counties of Kansas along the Kansas River, from its mouth to the junction of the Smoky Hill and Republican, are Wyandotte, Johnson, Leavenworth, Douglas, Jefferson, Shawnee, Wabaunsee, Pottawatomie, Riley and Geary.⁸⁶

Kansas Territory, as created in 1854, stretched west to the Continental Divide and thus included Pike's Peak and the headwaters of the South Platte. Discovery of gold in the Pike's Peak region in 1858 resulted in a gold rush, and in creation of a town, named after Governor James W. Denver of Kansas Territory.⁸⁷

Some gold seekers followed the Oregon and Trails to along the valley of the Platte, then followed the South Platte southwest to the mountains. Others followed the Santa Fe Trail to the valley of the Arkansas and turned north from the Arkansas. Both of these routes were relatively long and time-consuming.⁸⁸

For those who were more adventuresome or in a hurry, a shorter route was via the Fort Leavenworth-Fort Riley road and then on an old native trail up the valley of the Smoky Hill. This Smoky

Hill Trail had the drawback of having relatively little in the way of road ranches or other purveyors of goods and services. In a few months, all three routes were once again busy with disappointed gold seekers returning to the Midwest and points farther east.⁸⁹

Late in 1860, and in the early months of 1861, a sequence of interrelated events took place. In 1860, South Carolina seceded from the Union, followed by ten other Southern states. The departure of these states and their delegations in Congress cleared the way for the admission of Kansas to the Union, on January 29, 1861. A few weeks later, Confederate forces fired on Fort Sumter, and the Civil War officially began. On the Kansas-Missouri border, it was merely an intensification of a state of affairs which had existed since 1855.⁹⁰

Kansas, and particularly the Kansas River valley, continued to be a corridor of influence, but on different terms during, and particularly after the war. Railroads were built westward, and the young state began to fill with settlers. Most Indian tribes, native or emigrant, moved on to the future Oklahoma; four tribes settled for diminished reserves in Kansas or on the Kansas-Nebraska border.

FOOTNOTES

First, there was the river.

1. Christian, *Before Lewis and Clark: The Story of the Chouteaus, the French Dynasty that Ruled the Frontier* (New York: Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 2004).
2. Leo E. Oliva, Ed., "'Sent Out by Our Great Father': Zebulon Montgomery Pike's Journal and Route Across Kansas, 1806," *Kansas History* 29: 14-33 (Spring 2006); Root, "Ferries in Kansas: Part V-Solomon River," *Kansas Historical Quarterly* 3:339 (November 1934) [This is part of a multi-part article on Kansas ferries published from 1933 to 1937. For brevity, subsequent references will follow the following format: Root, "Ferries: Part V-Solomon River," *KHQ* 3: 339 (November 1934)]; *ibid.*, "Part VI-Smoky Hill River," *KHC* 4:3 (February 1935).
3. Root, "Ferries: Part II-Kansas River," *KHC* 2: 251 (August 1933); *ibid.*, "Part III-Blue River," *KHC* 3: 115 (May 1934); *ibid.*, "Part X-Grasshopper River," *KHC* 5: 319 (February 1936).

Then there were the emigrants.

4. Franzwa, *Maps of the Santa Fe Trail* (St. Louis: The Patrice Press, 1989).
5. Sociolofsky and Self, *Historical Atlas of Kansas* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1972), Maps 12 and 13; Bowes, *Exiles and Pioneers: Eastern Indians in the Trans-Mississippi West* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007), at 91.
6. *Ibid.*, Map 15; Barry, *The Beginnings of the West: Annals of the Kansas Gateway to the American West, 1540-1854* (Topeka: Kansas State Historical Society, 1972).

7. Treaty with the Kansas Indian Nation, June 3, 1825, 7 Stat. 244. The treaty is reproduced and discussed in *Dennison v. Topeka Chambers Indus. Dev. Corp.*, 527 F. Supp. 611, 627-630 (D. Kan. 1981), *affirmed*, 724 F.2d 869 (10th Cir. 1984). Tracts for the mixed-bloods were provided for in Article 6; payment of \$500 to Francis Chouteau, in Article 8.
8. Adams, "Reminiscences of Frederick Chouteau," *Transactions of the Kansas State Historical Society* [hereinafter "*Transactions*"] 8: 424-433 (1904), at 424-425; Christian, Before Lewis and Clark, at 343.
10. *Ibid.*, 7: 424-425, 428.
11. www.monticelloks.org/sites.htm#chouteau.
12. *Ibid.*; Root, "Ferries: Part II-Kansas River," KHQ 2: 251 (August 1933).
23. Root, "Ferries: Part II-Kansas River," KHQ 2: 262-263, 268-270 (August 1933).
13. Stanley, "Fort Leavenworth: Dowager Queen of Frontier Posts," KHQ 42:1-23 (Spring 1976), at 9-10.
14. Root, "Ferries: Part II-Kansas River," KHQ 2: 264-265 (August 1933). Root, "Ferries: Part II-Kansas River," KHQ 2: 264-265 (August 1933).
15. Adams, "Frederick Chouteau," *Transactions* 8: 424-425.
16. Abing, "Before Bleeding Kansas: Christian Missionaries, Slavery, and the Shawnee Indians in Pre-Territorial Kansas, 1844-1854," *Kansas History* 24: 54-70 (Spring 2001).
17. Bowes, *Exiles and Pioneers*, at 91.
18. Dolin, *Fur, Fortune, and Empire: The Epic History of the Fur Trade in America* (New York: Norton, 2010), 227-229.
19. *Ibid.*, 178-183, also Photo No. 54 after p. 238.
20. *Ibid.*, 379-380 n.18, also Photo No. 19 after p. 142; Connelly, "Characters and Incident of the Plains," in "Centennial Celebration at Pike's Pawnee Village," *Transactions* 10: 5-159 (1908), at 119.
21. Adams, "Frederick Chouteau," *Transactions* 8: 425.

More trails are opened, with ferries and bridges to serve them.

23. Franzwa, *Maps of the Oregon Trail* (St. Louis: The Patrice Press, 1990), 40-47.
24. *Ibid.*, 47-59.
25. Root, "Ferries: Part II-Kansas River," KHQ 2: 364 (November 1933).
26. *Ibid.*
27. Barnard, "Westport and the Santa Fe Trade," *Transactions* 9: 552-565 (1906), at 559.

28. Benbrook, "Pappan's Ferry and the Oregon-California Trail," *Overland Journal* 19: 2-21 (Spring 2001).
29. Weiss, "The John C. Fremont '1842, 1843-'44 Report' and Map," *Journal of Government Information* 26: 297-313 (May 1999).
30. Barry, "The Fort Leavenworth-Fort Scott Military Road and the Founding of Fort Scott," *KHQ* 11: 115-129 (May 1942).
31. *Ibid.*, Map between pp. 120-121; Stanley, "Fort Leavenworth," *KHQ* 42: 10 (Spring 1976).
32. Bernard, "Santa Fe Trade," at 559.
33. Socolofsky and Self, *Historical Atlas*, Map 4; Root, "Ferries: Part II-Kansas River," *KHQ* 2: 364 (November 1933).
34. Root, "Ferries: Part II-Kansas River," *KHQ* 2: 252-253 (August 1933).
35. Groom, *Kearny's March: The Epic Creation of the American West, 1846-1847* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2011), 9-11, 47-48, 262-264.
36. Barry, *Beginnings of the West*, at ___.
37. Mullen, *The Donner Party Chronicles: A Day-by-Day Account of a Doomed Wagon Train, 1846-47* (____), 38, 44.
38. *Ibid.*, 46-50.
39. *Ibid.*, 50-60.
40. Mullen, *Donner Party Chronicles*, at ___.
41. In his discussion of various ferries, Root gives the tolls imposed, when the information is available.

War comes to the West; soldiers march through the Kaw Valley.

42. Root, "Ferries: Part II-Kansas River, *KHQ* 2: 276 August 1933)
43. *Ibid.*, *KHQ* 2: 266 (August 1933).
44. Woods, "The 1854 Mormon Emigration at the Missouri-Kansas Border," *Kansas History* 32: 226-245 (Winter 2009-2010), at 227.
45. Hancock, "All Was Silence," in Bigler and Bagley, Eds., *Army of Israel: Mormon Battalion Narratives* (Spokane: Arthur H. Clarke Co., 2000), at 74-75.
46. *Ibid.*, at 86-91.

47. Tyler, *A Concise History of the Mormon Battalion in the Mexican War, 1846-1847*, at 139-140. Willow Springs is located approximately two and one-half miles north and one and one-half miles west of the intersection of US 56 and US 59 in Douglas County, Kansas. Domer, "Water in Willow Springs Township" *Kansas History* 19: 64-80 (Spring 1996), Map at 75.
48. DeVoto, *The Year of Decision: 1846* (Boston: Little, Brown & Co., 1943), 254.
49. Groom, *Kearny's March*, at 69. This work discusses the movement in general terms, but does not refer to the specific route(s) taken from Fort Leavenworth to the Santa Fe Trail.
50. Connelly, "Characters and Incidents," *Transactions* 10: 119 (1908).
51. DeVoto, *Year of Decision*.
52. Suttle and Suttle, *War Drums and Wagon Wheels: The Story of Russell, Majors and Waddell* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1966).
53. DeVoto, *Year of Decision*.
54. Root, "Ferries: Part II-Kansas River," *KHQ* 2: 365-366 (November 1933).
55. Bernard, "Santa Fe Trade," at 559.
56. Bowes, *Exiles and Pioneers*, at 245-247.
57. Smith, "The Oregon Trail through Pottawatomie County," *Collections of the Kansas State Historical Society* [hereinafter "*Collections*"] 17: 435-464 (1928), at 454.
58. Root, "Ferries: Part II-Kansas River," *KHQ* 3: 16-17, 20 (February 1934).
59. *Ibid.*
60. Root, "Ferries: Part III-Blue River," *KHQ* 3: 136, 137 (May 1934); Andreas, *History of the State of Kansas* (Chicago: A.T. Andreas, 1883), 914, 917.
61. McKale and Smith, *Fort Riley* (Charleston, S.C.: Arcadia Publishing, 2003); Werner, "The Fort Leavenworth-Fort Riley Road: And the Hobby of Following Old Trails," *Kansas Quarterly* __: 52-59 (____ 19__).
62. Root, "Ferries: Part III-Blue River," *KHQ* 3: 116-117 (May 1934) Smith, "Oregon Trail," *Collections* 9: 461, 463.
63. Root, "Ferries: Part II-Kansas River," *KHQ* 2: 283 (August 1933); *ibid.*, "Part V-Solomon River," *KHQ* 3: 339 (November 1934).
64. Bernard, "Santa Fe Trade," at 559.

Kansas becomes a Territory.

65. Act of May 30, 1854, 10 Stat. 277.
66. Socolofsky and Self, *Historical Atlas*.
67. Woods, "The 1854 Mormon Emigration at the Missouri-Kansas Border," *Kansas History* 32: 226-245 (Winter 2009-2010).
68. Etcheson, *Bleeding Kansas: Contested Liberty in the Civil War Era* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2004); Gates, *Fifty Million Acres: Conflicts over Kansas Land Policy, 1854-1890* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1954); Miner and Unrau, *The End of Indian Kansas: A Study of Cultural Revolution, 1854-1871* (Lawrence: Regents Press of Kansas, 1978).
69. Andreas, *Kansas*, 375-378, 423-428, 474-475, 483-484, 494-495, 1229-1232.
70. *Ibid.*, 312-323, 351-352, 533-534, 539-540, 1006-1008, 1301, 1306-1308; Cory, "Slavery in Kansas," *Transactions* 7: 241 (1902).
71. Flora, "The Great Flood of 1844 Along the Kansas and the Marais des Cygnes," *KHQ* 20: 73-81 (May 1952). After a huge and destructive flood in 1951, engineers and meteorologists concluded that the 1844 flood probably was several feet higher.
72. Andreas, *Kansas*, 461-462, 523, 534, 976, 978, 982-983; Olson, *Frontier Manhattan: Yankee Settlement to Kansas Town, 1854-1894* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2012), at 19-22.
73. Dickson, "The True Story of the Branson Rescue," *Collections* 13: 280-295 (1915), at 282-283; Green, "James B. Abbott," *Transactions* 6: 225-231 (1900), at 226.
74. Root, "Ferries: Part XIII-Wakarusa Creek," *KHQ* 6: 16-19 (February 1937); *The Kansas Indians*, 72 U.S. (5 Wall.) 737 (1866). This decision reversed that of the Supreme Court of Kansas in *Blue-Jacket v. Comm'rs of Johnson County*, 3 Kan. 294 (1865). The reference in the case caption is not to the Kansa tribe, but rather to three other tribes (Shawnee, Miami and Wea) located at the time in Kansas.
75. Miner, *Wichita: The Magic City* (Wichita: Wichita-Sedgwick County Museum Ass'n, 1988), 10-11, 13, 17, 26, 29, 62.
76. Gill, "The Establishment of Counties in Kansas," *Transactions* 8: 449-472 (1904), at 450; *Statutes of Kansas Territory* (1855), Chs. 30 [county boundaries]; 71 [ferries]; and 139 [roads and highways].
77. *Ibid.*, Ch. 30, Secs. 1, 6, 11, 16, 21, 27, 29, 31, 33.
78. *Ibid.*, Ch. 30, Sec. 32; Andreas, *Kansas*, 917.

79. Woods and Bashore, "On the Outskirts of Atchison: The Imprint of Latter-day Saint Transmigration at Mormon Grove," *Kansas History* 25: 38-51 (Spring 2002).
80. Root, "Ferries," 2: 253-255 (August 1933); *Walker v. Armstrong*, 2 Kan. 192 (1863).
81. *Ibid.*, 2: 259-261; *Guthrie v. Merrill*, 4 Kan. 159 (1867). For more background on Quindaro and Abelard Guthrie, see Bremer, "'A Species of Town-Building Madness': Quindaro and Kansas Territory, 1856-1862," *Kansas History* 26: 156-171 (Autumn 2003).
82. Harrington, *Historic Spots or Mile-Stones in the Progress of Wyandotte County, Kansas* (____: ____ 1935), 50.
83. Gill, "Counties," 451-452; *Kansas Territory Session Laws* (1857), An act more particularly to define the boundaries of the several counties in Kansas Territory, February 20, 1857, Sec. 34 at p. 45.
84. *Ibid.*, 452; *Session Laws* (1859), Chs. 47, Sec. 1 [creation of Wyandotte County]; 59, Sec. 1 (changing Richardson to Wabaunsee); and 99, Sec. 1 [changing Calhoun to Jackson].
85. *Ibid.*, 452-453; *Session Laws* (1860), Ch. 46, Sec. 1.
86. *Ibid.*, 453, 469; *Kansas Session Laws* (1865), Ch. 14, Sec. 1; *Ibid.* (1889), Ch. 132, Sec. 1.
87. Socolofsky and Self, *Historical Atlas*.
88. Gower, "Gold Fever in Kansas Territory: Migration to the Pike's Peak Gold Fields, 1858-1860," *KHQ* 39: 58-74 (Spring 1973); Lindsey, Ed., "The Journal of an 1859 Pike's Peak Gold Seeker," *KHQ* 22: 321-341 (Winter 1956).
89. *Ibid.*
90. Bisel, *The Civil War in Kansas: Ten Years of Turmoil* (Charleston: The History Press, 2012), at 112-118.

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