

Did the Reality Match the Expectations for Kansas Homesteaders?

RS#02- Kansas Farmers: Evidence (Group 2)

Directions: Analyze the historical sources and complete the chart and questions found on the Kansas Farmers: Document Analysis Worksheet. Be specific and detailed in your answers.

A.W. Johnson and Isabella Johnson to Robert S. Wickizer

The letter is from a family living in Kansas to another family living outside of Kansas. The families are cousins. The authors of the letter have settled in Kansas successfully and encouraged their cousins to move to Kansas. The letter was written in 1875, the year after grasshoppers destroyed most plant life in the area, including food sources, in Kansas.

Osage Mission Kansas
March the 24th 1875
Dear cousin Rob and Family
I received your of the ninth and
was much pleased to hear from
you after so long a time, but
was sorrow to hear of the death of
your mother and Wards children
I have been very sick since I received
your letter I came home sick from
town last Monday a week the
day I received your letter and
have not been able to be up till
yesterday or I should have
written sooner I had the
cancer lectus in the throat
my throat was swollen shut
for some days some very fear
going up. This is the only sickness
I have had since I came to Kansas

Well Rob you wanted to know
how close we all lived to
gether in Kansas. Father and
Abe Helene and myself lives
about six miles of each other
in Neosho county. Dave Jim and
Tom Campbell lives in Fort Scott
about thirty miles distance.
Dave is still on the Rail Road
Jim is on the city Police force
Tom is plastering doing ^{well} very
you wanted to know how
close the grass hoppers came
If you had got as many
bumps on the nose & face as
I did last fall you would
thought you had been among ^{em}
it no use for me to try to descri^e
graff hopper series I could not
do it justice some days when
they wase shifting you would
hear a noise over your head
like a train of cars in the air

on looking up you would see the whole elements darkens with grass hoppers when they came down at night they would cover the ground complete throes that lit down on a corn field no difference how large it was would devour ^{it} in one day time neither leave blade husk corn on cob. We had to cut our hay in August on account of them and then they would ruin the sicks so we could hardly cut they took every thing we had except our wheat last year was the only grass hoppers I have seen since I came here may be several years before they visit this part again they came from Colorado and are called the Colorado grass hoppers they hatch out on the descent

Well Rob there has been so much
said about Kansas destitution
that I fear you have got out
of the notion of coming its
time we are hard up just now
but I ain't the least discouraged
I have done well since I came here
I have sold two farms since I came
and now living on the third one
I think I have the best situation
in the country I live on the crossing
of two main traveled Roads
one mile and a half from the R
Road large running stream in 20
Rods of the house timber the same
distance the country is one of
the grandest I ever saw all like
it that come here yet the climate is
so mild the day you wrote your letter
the farmers was sowing oats all day frost
had been out long before and it was no more
went to Fort Scott that day and about every one
was sowing oats

Well as I did not finish on the
other page I will turn a ~~new~~ new
leaf. Well Robert, I think the best
thing you and your father
& Wash & Wickizer and as many more
as will come is come to Kansas
land is cheap yet and now is a good
time to buy while the grass hoppers
fever is up as soon as we get a
crop time will be good again.
The spring has set in delightful
oats are all sold and plowing
for corn there will be grate-
ful of corn planted in this
month if weather remains
warm we can raise anything
here that can be raised anywhere
peaches range from 10 cts 25- to 50 cts
per bushel I have four thousand
young trees to give away

I want you to think on the
subject of coming west and
and if you want any further
information write to me and
I will do all I can to assist you
I would like to see all of you
out here. You can talk to Wash
and the rest of the boys and let me
know the consequence but right soon
give my respects to Uncle & Bern
Aunt Betty George Wick John Frank
and the girls. Well Rob your family
is the same as mine except mine
is one boy and two girls Well
is considerable help to me now
he is very large of his age reads
in a first reader can handle
boy ten years old considerable
of a job when Well I must
close please excuse this letter
for I am very weak and nervous
from my illness
Add Osage Mission A. W. Johnson
Kansas

Text Version of the Letter

Osage Mission Kansas

March the 24th 1875

Dear cousin Rob and Family

I received your of the ninth and was much pleased to hear from you after so long a time, but was sorrow to learn of the death of your mother and Washes children. I have been very sick since I received your letter I came home sick from town last Monday a week, the day I received your letter and haven't been able to be up till yesterday or I should have written sooner I had the tonnsel leetus in the throat my throat was swollen shut for some days come very near going up. this is the only sickness I have had since I came to Kansas

Well Rob you wanted to know how close we all lived to in Kansas Lathen and Abe Zelnene and myself lives about six miles of Each other in Neosho county Dave Jim and Tom Campbell lives in Fort Scott about thirty miles distance. Dave is still on the Rail Road Jim is on the city Police force Tom is plastering doing very well you wanted to know how close the grass hoppers came If you had got as many bumps on the nose & face as I did last fall you would thought you had been among them its no use for me to try to describe grass hopper senes I could not do it Justice some days when they wase shifting you would hear a noise over your head like a train of cars in the air on looking up you would see the whole Elements darkens with grass hoppers when they came down at night they would cover the ground complete thoes that lit down on a corn field no difference how large it was would devour it in one days time nether leave blade husk corn on cob. We had to cut our hay in augest on acount of them and then they would jam the sickle so we could hardly cut they took every thing we had except our wheat last year was the only grasshoppers I have seen since I came here may be several years before they visit this part again they came from colerado and are called the colerado grass hoppers they hatch out on the dessert

Well Rob there has been so much said about kansas destitution that I fear you have got out of the notion of coming its true we are hard up just now but I aint the least discouraged I have done well since I came here I have sold two farms since I came and now living on the third one I think I have the best situation in the county I live on the crosing of two main traveled Roads one mile and a half from the R Road large running stream in 20 Rods of the house timber the same distance the country is one of the grandest I ever saw all likes it that come here yet the climate is so mild the day you rote your letter the farmers was sowin oats all day frost had been out long before and it was warm i went to Frt Scott that day and about everyone was soweing oats

Well as I did not finish on the other page I will turn a new leaf. Well Robert, I think the best thing you and Asa & your [XXXXX] Washe Wiekizer and as many more as will come is come to kansas land is cheep yet and now is a good time to buy while the grasshopper fever is up as soon as we get a crop time will bee good again the spring has set in deliteful oats are all soed and plowing for corn. There will be grate deal of corn

planted in this month if weather remains warm we can raise any thing here that can be raised anywhere peaches ranges from 10 cts 25 to 50 cts per bushel. I have four thousand young trees to give away

I want you to think on the subject of coming west and if you want any further Information Write to me and I will do all I can to assist you I would like to see all of your out here. You can talk to Wash and the rest of the boys and let me know the consequence bob right soon give my respects to Uncle & Bem[xxx] Aunt Betsy George Vick John Frank and the girls. Well Rob your family is the same as mine except mine is one boy and two girls. Will is considerable help to me now he is very large of his age reads in a first reader can handle boys ten years old considerable of a Jayhawker Well I must close please excuse this letter for I am very weak and nervous yet from my illness
Old Osage Mission Kansas A. W. Johnson

I shall be compelled to put out a crop this spring without any feed for my horses corn is so high I can't buy to support my family we haven't received a penny from Eastern Donations it goes to those entirely destitute I had a little laid up that kept me so far. corn from 88 to one dollar per bush very poor at that Wheat looks well this spring we cut Wheat here in June

Well bob this sheet is an extra sheet I must be a little ahead of you I have sit so long I am completely played so Excuse me Wright soon I will answer immediately

Very Respectfully

A.

W. Johnson

B.

Isabella Johnson

C.

To R S and Rene Wickizer