



## JACKSON COUNTY, MISSOURI

### WESTPORT LANDING & TOWN OF KANSAS

#### **Reverend Jerome C. Berryman**

##### **1839 winter, from memoir**

“...I was commissioned by the Rev. Thomas Johnson to go to Pittsburgh, Pa., to purchase materials for the Shawnee Manual Labor School. This trip to Pittsburgh was made as far as Louisville, Ky., on horseback. Taking my Kickapoo interpreter, Eneas, with me we passed down through Missouri, Illinois and a portion of Kentucky, giving missionary talks by the way. This put \$500 to \$600 in hand for the benefit of our missions. ... Brother Browning [Rev. Wesley Browning] was a valuable assistant to me in the purchase and shipment of what we needed, which in bulk and value amounted to a steamboat load. For the transportation of this freight, I chartered a new boat just built by Captain Kizer, for the Missouri river. The cargo was safely delivered by the ‘Shawnee,’ for that was her name, at Westport Landing, now Kansas City, and Brother Johnson was much pleased with the manner in which the trust had been discharged.”

\*\*\*\*\*Nineteenth-century traders and emigrants passed through American Indian lands. Also missionaries of various denominations definitely were a part of the milieu of the western landscape. Westport Landing was the closest river landing for Rev. Berryman since the Shawnee Manual Labor School was located to the southwest of Westport. **Source:** Ross, Edith Connelley. *The Old Shawnee Mission*. Topeka: Kansas State Printing Plant printed for The Shawnee Mission Memorial Foundation, 1928, quote on pp. 14-15.

#### **Francis Parkman**

##### **1846 early May, from memoir**

“... Early on the next morning we reached Kansas [town of] about five hundred miles from the mouth of the Missouri. Here we landed, and leaving our equipments [sic] in charge of my good friend Colonel Chick, whose log-house was the substitute for a tavern, we set out in a wagon for Westport, where we hoped to procure mules and horses for the journey.”

\*\*\*\*\*Historians write the town of Kansas in two different ways, that is, as “Town of Kansas” or as “town of Kansas”. The original name of the town was just “Kansas”, so many think the “t” in the “town of Kansas” should not be capitalized. In 1846 Parkman used just the name “Kansas” for the town. Parkman’s description seems to imply that the landing is part of the town of Kansas. **Source:** Parkman, Francis. *The Oregon Trail: Sketches of Prairie and Rocky Mountain Life*. Edited by William McDonald. Chicago: Scott, Foresman, 1911, 1919, quote on p. 23. Accessed from U-M Library Digital Collections at [quod.lib.umich.edu/m/moa/5087610.0001.001?rgn=main;view=fulltext](http://quod.lib.umich.edu/m/moa/5087610.0001.001?rgn=main;view=fulltext) on April 13, 2020.



### **Thaddeus A. Culbertson**

**1850 March 25**

“We have just passed the village of Kansas [town of Kansas]; it is a new place but already has several good large brick warehouses below the bluff, while the town appears to extend back considerably above it. Nine Indian men and a boy were standing on the shore and sang [saluted us with] a song as we came to land; they were all dressed in Indian costume and had their faces painted red. One of them went into the ladies cabin and staid [sic] until the boat was off; the passengers had a great deal of amusement about his getting off but at last the boat put ashore again and landed him. ... A very short distance above the town the Kansas River comes in; it is now about 200 yards wide; the land north of it belongs to the Indians and from this point we had the state [of Missouri] on one side and the Indian country on the other. ...”

\*\*\*\*\*This steamboat going up the Missouri River in 1850 made short stops at the Liberty Landing, at both Independence landings, and at the town of Kansas to let passengers disembark or embark. Freight also could be delivered or taken on board. Culbertson’s party did not disembark until St. Joseph, where the party then went by carriage to Ft. Pierre to collect fossils in the Badlands. Culbertson calls the “village of Kansas” “a new place”, but the town had been laid out in 1838. Nonetheless, a number of years passed before the town was seen as more than just an extension of the landing. Like Independence, the town of Kansas existed for many years before municipal elections occurred. The first municipal elections in the town of Kansas took place in 1853. As seen in this quote, misunderstandings between American Indians and European Americans easily occurred when no one of one group knew the others’ language and/or understood the others’ culture. **Source:** Culbertson, Thaddeus A. *Journal of an Expedition to the Mauvaises Terres and the Upper Missouri in 1850*. Smithsonian Institution, Bureau of American Ethnology, *Bulletin 147*. Wash., D.C.: Govt. Printing Office, 1952, quote on p. 20.

### **Lorena L. Hays**

**1853 March 20 to April 27**

“21<sup>st</sup> Last evening left the “Clara” [steamboat from St. Louis]. Now at the hotel in Kansas [town of]. ...yet it is with some misgivings that I think of starting across the plains. I expect to see some very trying times. ... Kansas seems to be quite a pleasant little place so far as I can judge yet. I have had no opportunity to see yet. I must write some letters while staying here. ...

23<sup>rd</sup> Monday Uncle found a house and we are now at home for a little while at least. I was disappointed in its being so far from the river. I just now hear a steamboat, but we cannot see them which would be some variety in our strange home, heard the church bells to night.... I



have had no opportunity to see the place yet. There are Indians in town every day. We are only two miles from the territory—...

March 31<sup>st</sup>—Last Sunday went to church. ... Yesterday Uncle accompanied us down upon Water Street. I saw some Indians, some of the Wyandotte tribe. ... We also saw two of the “Caws.” They were on their way to St. Louis .... To day [sic] we received some letters ....

April 1<sup>st</sup> Walked half a mile yesterday to a Catholic Church. It was built of logs. Seemed quite antique. It was very tastefully adorned with pictures and vases of beautiful artificial flowers. ...

April 6<sup>th</sup> ...Many of the Wyandottes have intermarried with the french and americans. ... I have but little to do so I can read considerable which suits me very well. ...

April 8<sup>th</sup> Walked yesterday by the river. Could see Wyandotte away up the river, just where the Kansas [River] comes in. Its few log houses nestles quietly on a hillside as do all of the towns on the Missouri, or the most of them at least are built on points of bluffs and extending back on the hills. ...

13<sup>th</sup> Yesterday Mrs. Northrup, an Indian lady, wife of a merchant, and Mrs. Cants called on us. ... Last evening mother and I called at Mr. Pealfry’s. They expect to go in company with us; appear like pleasant people. ...

17<sup>th</sup> ...this morning five Caw Indians came to our house begging. We gave them their breakfast. ... Uncle has not returned yet, but will be here to start next week, then good bye to Kansas. I shall look for the rest of our Company this week. ....

Apr 20<sup>th</sup> ... The bluffs and hills, & vales are beginning to be covered with green, .... There is talk that the great Pacific railroad will pass through here.

23 [no “th”] Our house is quite a depot for Californians at present. All of the trains from Barry [Illinois] have arrived, but Uncle has not yet returned from buying cattle. Oh dear! How I wish we were all ready to start out with the other trains. I am afraid we shall get behind. Uncle Adam came yesterday but left his company ten miles above & will not be with us until we cross Caw River which will be 80 miles from here. We shall not see any of them. Some of our folks have gone down to the camp to see how they get along. They have just returned. ...

25<sup>th</sup> Went to church for the last time last evening, I suppose, until we arrive in California. ... Mr. Alkire’s and Israel’s trains intend starting tomorrow. ...

27<sup>th</sup> Went down to the camp night before last. The next day they all started, and we are still waiting for Uncle Henry. Uncle Lithgow is going up the otherside [sic] of the Caw River. Mr. Alkire said they would go slow and thought we would overtake them. I am afraid we shall not. Mrs. Israel was very anxious to have us all start together. She will be lonely as there are no more women along. ...”

\*\*\*\*\*Many families, some related, left from Barry, Illinois with the agreement to meet at the town of Kansas and Westport so as to leave together in a wagon train headed to California. Lorena Hays’s family arrived early and stayed in a house in the town of Kansas for about 5



weeks. Nonetheless, that family's uncle had not arrived with cattle after the grasses were greening, so some of the company was leaving before the Hays group. Either Lorena's family may have had more money than at least some of the others from Barry or the family may have arrived much earlier than some because some families were camping while Lorena's family still was renting a house. Lorena indicates that many of the Barry, Illinois families came to the town of Kansas in wagons. This is an example showing that not all eastern emigrants came to the town of Kansas via steamboats. **Source:** Hays, Lorena L. *To the Land of Gold and Wickedness: The 1848-59 Diary of Lorena L. Hays*. Edited by Jeanne Hamilton Watson. St. Louis: Patrice Press, 1988, excerpt from pp. 146-151.

### **Anna Maria Goodell**

**1854 May 1**

"Was very pleasant this forenoon, but this afternoon it has rained quite hard. We stopped at Richfield [Missouri] this morning and saw some Indians. They were painted with feathers tied in their hair. They looked very savage. Stopped at Kansas [town of] this afternoon. Mr. Shannon's family got off there and start from there to California.

We have been on the boat just one week, have left Kansas [town of] and have just got on a sand bar. Don't think we will get off til morning."

\*\*\*\*\*The Goodell family, in an organized company headed to Oregon, had traveled by railroad and steamboat from Detroit, Michigan via Chicago to St. Louis and was continuing on steamboat until would switch to wagon. Nonetheless, Anna speaks of a Shannon family that did disembark at the town of Kansas to leave for California from there. When the steamboat was farther east in Missouri, Anna speaks of some Indians as looking "savage". In the nineteenth century, European Americans commonly perceived Indians as primitive if they were not wearing European American clothing. **Source:** "Vermillion Wagon Train Diaries, 1854: Anna Maria Goddell [sic] & Elizabeth Austin", 78-130, quote on p. 91, in Holmes, Kenneth L., editor. *Covered Wagon Women: Diaries & Letters from the Western Trails, 1854-1860*, Vol. 7. Lincoln: Univ. of Nebraska Press, 1998 [reprint of 1987 edition].

### **W.B. Napton**

**1857 spring, from 1905 memoir**

"Kansas City [had been town of Kansas] was even then, in 1857, an aspiring town. For a month or two in the spring the levee was covered with wagons and teams, and sometimes four or five steamboats were at the wharf discharging freight. General John W. Reid had recently bought forty acres, the northwest corner of which is now the intersection of Broadway and Twelfth street, for \$2,000. The land was covered with timber, which he cut into cord wood and sold to the steamboats for about enough to pay for the land.



There were no streets, and only one road from the levee, leaving the river front at Grand avenue, running obliquely across to Main street and back again to Grand avenue, in McGee's addition. Colonel Milton McGee had taken down his fences and laid off his cornfields into lots."

\*\*\*\*\*The town of "Kansas" was renamed the "City of Kansas" in 1853. Then in 1889 the city was renamed yet again to the current name of "Kansas City". Napton is writing his memoir in 1905 and uses the last of the three names. **Source:** Napton, W.B. *On the Santa Fe Trail in 1857*. Arrow Rock: Friends of Arrow Rock, 1991 [reprint of Kansas City, MO: Franklin Hudson Publishing, 1905], quote on pp. 5-6.

### **Albert D. Richardson**

#### **1857 May 30, from 1867 memoir**

"[after leaving from St. Louis on May 28] We reached Kansas City, Missouri, in two days from St. Louis, and thought it excellent time. Once afterward, in low water, I was 9 days making the journey. The [railroad] cars now [in 1867] accomplish it in fourteen hours.

Kansas City perching on a high bluff commanding a fine view of the river for miles below, was a very important point—in a neck-and-neck race with Leavenworth and St. Joseph for the rich prize of the great commercial metropolis of the far West[.] In front of the town of Kansas the broad shouldered landing sloping down to the edge presented a confused picture of immense piles of all kinds of freight, horse, ox, and mule teams receiving merchandise from the steamers, scores of immigrant wagons, and a busy crowd of whites, Indians, half-breeds, negroes and Mexicans.

There were solid brick houses and low frame shanties along the levee, and scattered unfinished buildings on the hill above, where 'the Grade' was being cut fifteen or twenty feet deep, through abrupt bluffs. Carts and horses wallowed in the mud of these deep excavations, and the houses stood trembling on the verge as if in fear of tumbling over...."

\*\*\*\*\*In the *Platte River Road Narratives*, trail historian Merrill Mattes indicates that Albert D. Richardson was a journalist who traveled numerous times in the West from 1857 through 1866. Richardson, like many journalists of the time, embedded himself in the West to write first-hand news accounts for those in the East. After his last western trip, Richardson used his original newspaper articles to compile an 1867 memoir in which he does acknowledge the competition between Leavenworth, St. Joseph, and Kansas City to attract travelers. In Richardson's quote, he seems to be only talking about the town of Kansas, although the business of that town was intertwined with that of Westport. Curiously he does not mention Independence, Missouri. At the 1857 time of this writing, the terms "half-breeds" and "negroes" were in use, but now the term "half-breed" is considered derogatory and the term "negroes" would be capitalized, although the terms "Blacks" or "African Americans" now would be used. Much of the above



quote, although not all, can be found on page 30 of the well-known 1982 book titled *At the River's Bend: An Illustrated History of Kansas City: Independence and Jackson County*. The above quote appears as it was printed in the 1867 memoir. The quote in the 1982 book is somewhat edited. **Source:** Richardson, Albert D. *Beyond the Mississippi*. Hartford, Conn.: Wiley, Waterman, & Eaton, 1867. Accessed online from Hathi Trust database at [onlinebooks.library.upenn.edu](http://onlinebooks.library.upenn.edu) on April 9, 2020.

### **Mary Elizabeth Lightner**

#### **1863 early June**

"...[while riding a steamer] We stopped at Kansas City; plenty of Mexicans were there, loading teams for Mexico. ..."

\*\*\*\*\*The nineteenth-century town of Kansas, officially named just "Kansas" and then "City of Kansas", gradually came to be called "Kansas City" before the city officially changed its name to "Kansas City" in 1889. Lightner uses the name "Kansas City" in 1863. The Lightner family was traveling with a Mormon party that left on a steamer in Minnesota on May 25. By May 29, the steamer unloaded grain at Montrose, Iowa across from Nauvoo, Illinois. These travelers disembarked at St. Joseph on June 6 before returning to the boat headed to Omaha. The family first went to Florence, now within the city of Omaha, before heading westward to Utah.

**Source:** "Journal of a Mormon Woman, 1863: Mary Elizabeth Lightner", 95-108, quote on p. 100, in Holmes, Kenneth L., editor. *Covered Wagon Women: Diaries & Letters from the Western Trails, 1862-1865*, Vol. 8. Lincoln: Univ. of Nebraska Press, 1999 [reprint of 1989 edition], pp. 95-108.