

Bypaths of Kansas History

EASTERN AND CENTRAL KANSAS IN 1878

The following communication was written by Stephen G. Schenck. A grandson, Clyde P. Schenck of Topeka, recently donated several family letters to the State Historical Society.

SILVER LAKE KAN.

Aug. 3rd 1878

DEARLY BELOVED BROTHER: . . . I am at Silver Lake with all the family we are only tolerable well Several of the family have been chilling we are on a rented farm we tenced 100 acres in corn it is as good a prospect as I ever saw any where. I have not Bought any land yet think I shall invest of what little capital I have in cattle I bought 25 head a few days ago 22 yearlings 3 two year old paid for yearlings \$15 for 2 year old \$25 if I buy land it would have to be low priced.

Well, I will tell you about my situation I am twelve miles west or rather northwest of Topeka and 1 mile East of Silver Lake on the K. P. R. R. I don't know where I will settle yet have to look around a little I have been one considerable round traveled over 300 miles rout from Topeka via Emporia Florence Cottonwood Newton Halstead thence north to Salina thence East through Solomon City Abilene Ft. Riley Manhattan and so on home. Saw the finest wheat country in Harvy McPherson and Saline counties that I ever saw in my life tens of thousands of acres nothing but wheat not a fence in the whole country and no timber I also saw tens of thousands of acres fit for nothing but grazing and some too rough and rocky even for that. . . .

Well on the whole I think I like Kas well and expect to make it my home this valey where I live I think is the garden spot of the United States but land is too high. . . .

S. G. SCHENCK.

AN ASSESSOR REBELS AGAINST THE PAPER WORK

E. B. Ensign, assessing for Walnut township, Jewell county, March, 1885, appended these remarks (as found in Kansas state census records, 1885, v. 122, Kansas State Historical Society).

In most cases the figures here given are nearly correct but in numbers 39-40-41-42-43 & 44 they are the mereist guess work farmers Wives are in the habit of churning a little butter every few days they use as much as they require for family use the surplus if any is taken to the Store to be exchanged for goods the same may be said of Eggs. also in the matter of animals Slaughtered and sold for Slaughter. Few people are able to tell at the end of the year the value of animals thus sold many times they sell a few at a time to meet expenses the money used and no act kept and at the end of the year the amount is entirely unknown

Therefore in my opinion much of the labor required of Assessors is entirely useless and Vexacious and would respectfully suggest that the forms be revised. . . .