



(Kansas) Cole, Joseph M., (1806-1858) Group of Papers Pertaining to Joseph M. Cole, former Mormon, Early Kansas Settler, and Militia Captain Defending a Free Kansas, 1847 – 1856, with a group of related family papers and ephemera 1873 – 1925

This collection is in two groups:

The earlier group 1847 – 1856, consisting of 3 letters, 12 pages, three printed broadsheet circulars, and circular letters, dated 1856, one important manuscript document forming a militia company against "certain lawless and unprincipled persons residing in and near the borders of Missouri," dated 1856.

The latter group dated 1873 – 1925, 3 letters, 4 pages, two postcards, 5 printed ephemeral items, these consist of materials pertaining to Kansas author and newspaperman Frank A. Root, who seems to have married into the Cole family, and from who the Cole papers descended. Root was the author of *The Overland Stage to California ... Topeka: 1901*, (cf. Howes R-434).

The papers offered here are likely the sole surviving papers of Joseph M. Cole (1806 – 1858) early Kansas settler, militia captain and advocate of a Free Kansas, who may have died in service of that cause, in 1858. The Cole archive must have been a most interesting one, Cole was an early Mormon convert, settled in Nauvoo, traveled overland to California in 1852, and settled in Kansas in 1855, and took an active part in the Free Kansas cause. A 1925 letter by Frank A. Root, who had possession of Cole's papers, hints at how they were lost; most of the papers were destroyed in a flood in Topeka some twenty years earlier. He sends the papers offered here to his grandson, stating that they were "the cream of the crop."

Joseph M. Cole, teacher and farmer, was born in New York. He was Baptized into the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and ordained an elder, by 1836. He moved to Illinois circa 1842, and moved to Nauvoo, Hancock County, Illinois by 1843. Appointed recorder for baptisms of the dead, July 30, 1843, in Nauvoo. He taught Nauvoo Seminary with daughter Adelia, 1843-1844. Appointed to serve

mission to Pennsylvania, April 145, 1844. He Married Eliza James, May 21, 1844, in Nauvoo. Appointed clerk of high council June 1, 1844, in Nauvoo. Nominated Sidney Rigdon as president of Church of Christ and appointed an apostle April 1845 in Pittsburgh. Cole left the church in 1845. By 1847 he was living in La Harpe, Hancock County, Illinois. In 1852 he traveled overland to California, settling in Sacramento. He moved near Indianola, Shawnee County, Kansas Territory, May 1855. He engaged in Free State activities and was elected a militia captain to defend against Missourians in 1856 at Indianola. He died in Shawnee County in 1858. He was buried in Rochester Cemetery, Topeka, Shawnee County, Kansas.

<https://www.josephsmithpapers.org/person/joseph-m-cole>

Sample Quotes:

Spencertown [Columbia County, New York] May 4, 1847, Harvey Cole, to his brother, Joseph, La Harpe, Illinois

“Dear Brother,

I hear with pleasure that you are well situated and enjoying well the blessings of this life – That you have given up in a measure the ardor that you once possessed in relation to Religion – There is such a thing as being too zealous in a good cause.

I learned today that Adelia had written to mother which is the first tidings that we had heard from you in more than a year – Many years have elapsed since you saw your native hills and during that period there has been great changes in the situation of our family. Mother is all that is left of our family at present upon the homestead. William manages Grand Father’s farm. Charles lives in Troy Renselaer Co. Celina lives in Albany working at the Millinery business Rachel as you know lives in the Bigalow neighborhood. Emily is married got a Boy, she lives in East Nassau. I too have a family one child a Boy over two years old. Edgar is studying Medicin, he lives with me, he is on the last year of his study. ... I am situated about 20 miles from home, (or Mothers) 14 miles from Hudson. I have been practicing medicine 5 years and over 4 years of the time I have been practicing in this place, a nice little village and rather a wealthy place. ... I am doing a chargeable business of say 1200 dollars pr year ...

Charles has moved to Troy this spring, he is going into trade there I believe – I say I believe, I live within 20 miles of home but it has been most 10 months since I have found time to visit mother. I know but little what is going on in Lebanon except by hearsay ... Mother has had that tumor taken off her shoulder, it weighed about 4 pounds. She had it taken off last fall, since she recovered from the operation she has enjoyed better health than she enjoyed for years previous to the operation.

Grand Father still lives or vegetates rather for he has lost nearly all of senses the last time that I was home I could not make him know who I was. He can see scarcely nothing and he pays no attention at all to his habbits of cleanliness &c...

I wish to ask a word or two in regard to the practice of Physic in that country, have you a class of Physins that practice on the Homaeopathic plan, why I ask I wish to learn how the system flourishes in the west In this country it is the prevailing practice I practice it entirely it has been about 3 years since I have turned my attention to that subject and I can safely say that the amount of practice is diminished one third by the new system – 3 years ago there were not more than 6 families in this whole town that were Homathic, now more than 9/10 of this town employ that practice – I want you to write me the condition of Homaeopathy in that country if you know anything about it ... Harvey Cole” [sic]

"Pottowatomy County Io on the Bank of the Missouri river 4 miles south east of Kanessville¹ May 15th, 1852

Dear Eliza,

Once more I improve the opportunity to write to you informing you of my journey and health thus far. We arrived at Kanessville day before yesterday (May 13) after a very tedious and fatiguing journey it having rained more than half the number of days since we left the Mississippi River, we have however arrived without any serious accident and all in tolerably good health though much fatigued we did not stop in Kanessville the day we came through but as soon as we could force ourselves through the crowds of wagons we came on four miles to the river where we turned our teams loose to graze and recruit on the bottoms where thousands of other teams are feeding here I will say of our teams they look as well and some of them better than when we started. Mr. Tuttle's large oxen are too slow for the balance of our team I was selected to drive them up to Kanessville yesterday and sell them and purchase another yoke to answer our purpose I did not sell them. I then took a survey of Kanessville. It is a Mormon City of log houses in the shape of the letter L situated in a narrow gulch between two hills, with only one street, and the houses crowded together on each side situated four miles from the river and contains fifteen hundred inhabitants who are all making preparations to move to Salt Lake in June next I saw and talked with Orson Hyde², Mr Chaffin³ of La Harpe, who with his family lives here, Almon Babbit⁴, Charles Warner⁵, Old man Harris, and many others whom I formerly knew. I have not yet seen she that was Mrs. Coulson (Nancy Coulson) she lives at trader point two miles below our camp and will start with her husband for California next Monday, (and now for her husband) who is none other than Peter Haws⁶, of Nauvoo notoriety Mrs Coulson was keeping a boarding house and taking in sewing when two or three weeks ago last Saturday, Peter Haws buried his second wife, and the next day (Sunday) married Mrs. Coulson. Mr. Hickok has been down to the point to register our teams for crossing; saw and conversed with Mrs. Haws. When we had got within eleven miles of Kanessville on the west bank of Keg creek I called into a log cabin by the road side for a drink of water, a woman stood at the table mixing dough; I did not notice her face particularly, but asked for water for three persons, when she says where are you from, I replied La Harpe Ill. She said you are Mr. Cole, I replied yes as sure as Betsey Ann Dun, by this time our teams had come up and we all stopped for a few minutes till she could call Harvey who was ploughing across the road; our meeting fairly overcome Mrs Dun with joy, our teams then drove on and Hickok and myself staid perhaps half an hour, making and answering inquiries it was here I learned that Mrs. Coulson was married, that Chaiffin lived in Kanessville, that old Mr. Dunn lived within 3 miles of Harvey, that Orren Dunn was dead, that old Mr. Shaw lives at Salt Lake, and many other things...

Now a few remarks about the country since I wrote my last, when I wrote to you before was I think on Sunday the 2d of May we had stopped to await the termination of a heavy storm of wind, and rain, through which we had traveled three and a half long hours, and after the storm had cleared up we proceeded on our journey till night when we encamped on the open prairie as we often do carrying our wood with us for cooking one common sack full is sufficient for supper and breakfast – we had scarcely pitched our tents when the clouds began to roll up from every part of the heavens with lightning and thunder... and then came the storm and such a storm as would cast into the shade anything that I had ever seen for fury and violence... the country from here to the Bluffs is one of the most delightful appearance in the world; but never can be settled for want of timber for hundreds of miles in extent there is not timber enough to fence the farms of one township – the soil is exceedingly rich and the water exceedingly bad, the country is everywhere covered with elk horns, some of monstrous size, and thousands rattle snakes and bull snakes, infest all parts of the state, I have no doubt but I have seen one hundred rattlesnakes in a day either killed by ourselves, or others, that have passed before us – I

am now sitting in front of our wagon writing this letter upon the top of a box, the Missouri with her muddy waters before me, and on the opposite banks stands a skirt of dark timber that fringes the edge of that territory in which no white man dwells yesterday six teams were stopped by the Indians who spread their blankets in the road and declared the whites should not pass through their territory without paying for it, they paid \$ 1 pr wagon and were suffered to proceed; the day before 30 men returned after having proceeded 80 miles in the territory, were robed of their teams, provision and clothing – and returned in a state of destitution - Doct. Crawford crossed the river the day before we arrived the (14th) We have heard that Warren and Ross had all their outfit sunk in the river coming up to St. Jo where he had to purchase a new outfit.

Dear Eliza I have now been over a month from home and have not heard one word from you it seems an age, when can I hear from you God only knows – and you will probably not hear from me again till we reach fort Laramie ... you will surely write me a letter as soon as the 25th of June, and another by the 15th of July, and direct them both to Sacramento City California so that if one fails I shall be sure to get the other do not fail in complying with this request and write all the particulars especially of yourself and children, and the families – I called this morning to see Mr Crowell and wife Mrs Crowell has got the dropsy very bad they are preparing to start for Salt Lake in two weeks she sends her love to you and made particular enquiry about her girl, little Frances – I had forgot to say that Mrs Coulson and Widow Knap has compromised their difficulty and Mrs Coulson has received about three hundred dollars of Coulsons property – two of Coulsons brothers came into Kanessville yesterday on their way to California they knew not of Coulsons death till they arrived Old Mrs Fowler is living here and married again to a man by the name of Whitlock ... Joseph M. Cole ...”

Nov. Wednes 3rd 1852, Adelia Cole, to her father, Joseph M. Cole, Sacramento, California

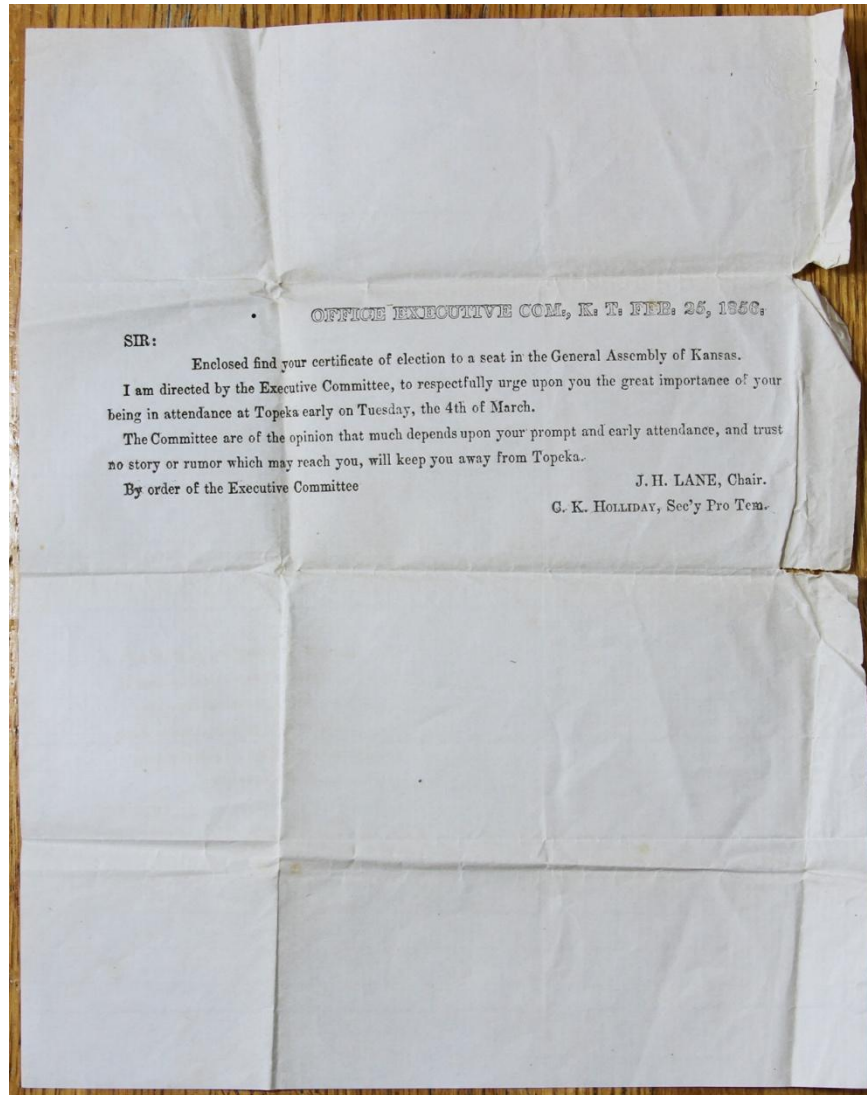
“Dear Father,

With an overflowing heart, I again prepare to write to my far distant and long absent parent – Oh! My father! My dear father! I cannot realize the length of time or distance that separate us – that I am among the hills of Lebanon, any more than, that you are toiling upon the golden sands of California. Yet it is even so I am amid the scenes and friends of your childhood the sacred influences of your early home...

But alas! What a trying task is mine – the trying duty of communicating tidings which must in their nature inflict upon a tired and wounded spirit ... Nerve yourself my beloved father to bear with Christian fortitude the awful dispensations of Providence the Angel of death has again visited your early home and from its beloved domestic circle removed its most cherished member your Mother is no more ...

I left La Harpe in company with E M (with whom I parted at Cleveland) and after a pleasant journey of 11 days reached the Springs Sept 27 I found the old house desolate and in the hands of strangers Uncle William who occupies Grand father's house (which however has been thoroughly repaired) and who owns nearly all of the two farms... I met with an affectionate welcome from all my relatives that I have seen and your weary child rests now in confidence in tearful composure for she feels that she is at home she feels that noble true and sympathizing hearts are beating around her and in the calm quiet peaceful enjoyment offered in the hospitable homes and in the kind intelligent home circles of your brothers and sisters she feels that both her moral and physical nature will gain renewed strength and health... Adelia B. Cole”

Printed and Manuscript Documents:



Free-State Party, Kansas Territory, Executive Committee, **Office Executive Com., K. T. Feb. 25, 1856.**

Sir:

Enclosed find your certificate of election to a seat in the General Assembly of Kansas. I am directed by the Executive Committee, to respectfully urge upon you the great importance of your being in attendance at Topeka early on Tuesday, the 4th of March.

The Committee are of the opinion that much depends upon your prompt and early attendance, and trust no story or rumor which may reach you, will keep you away from Topeka.

By order of the Executive Committee

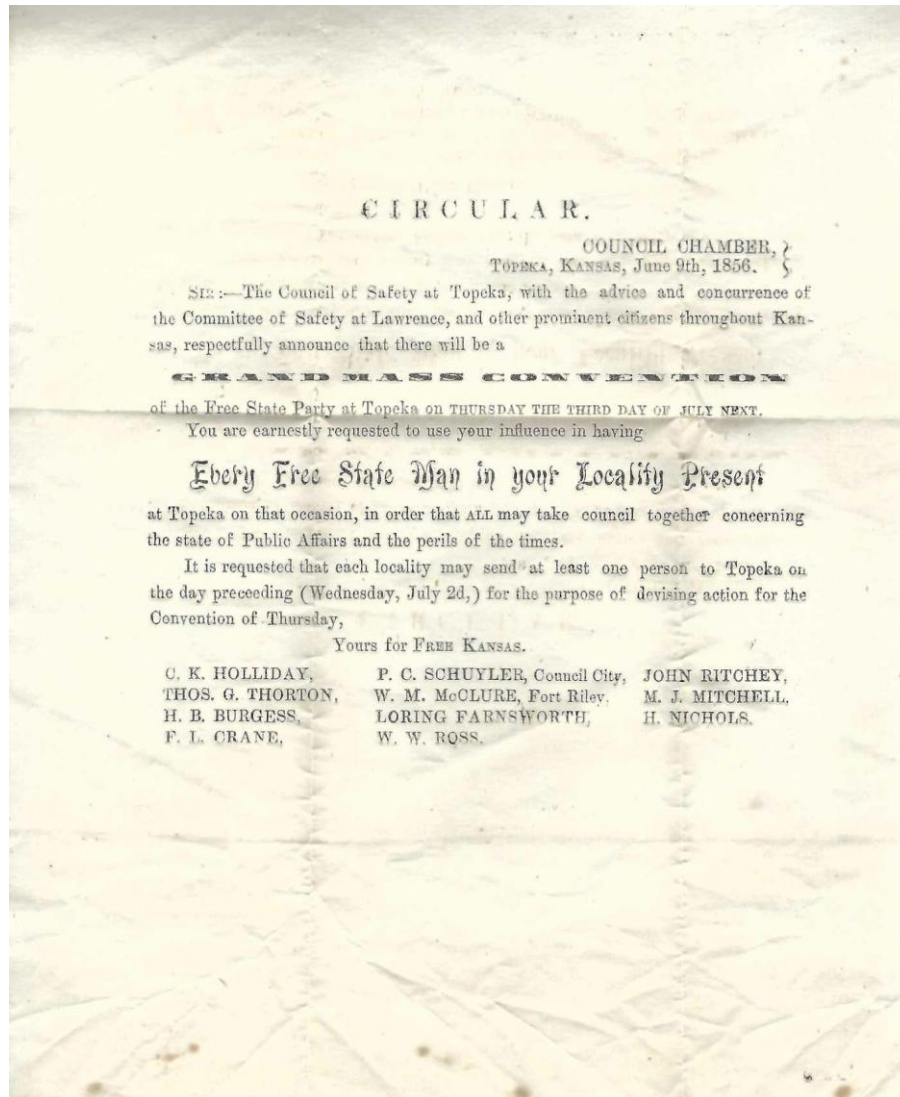
J. H. Lane, Chair.

C.K. Holliday, Sec'y Pro Tem.

[Topeka: 1856] quarto, single sheet, printed circular, measuring 10 $\frac{3}{4}$ x 7 $\frac{5}{8}$ inches, folded, right edge of sheet ruffled some tears and nicks to right edge, not affecting text. Signed in type by James H. Lane, as chairman of the committee and C. K. Holliday, Secretary pro Tem.

James Henry Lane, was a pivotal figure in Kansas history, (son of Amos Lane), a Representative from Indiana and a Senator from Kansas; born in Lawrenceburg, Ind., June 22, 1814; attended the public schools; studied law; admitted to the bar in 1840 and commenced practice in Lawrenceburg; member of the city council; served in the Mexican War; lieutenant governor of Indiana 1849-1853; elected as a Democrat to the Thirty-third Congress (March 4, 1853-March 3, 1855); moved to the Territory of Kansas in 1855; member of the Topeka constitutional convention 1855; elected to the United States Senate by the legislature that convened under the Topeka constitution in 1856, but the election was not recognized by the United States Senate; president of the Leavenworth constitutional convention in 1857; elected as a Republican to the United States Senate in 1861; reelected in 1865 and served from April 4, 1861, until his death; chairman, Committee on Agriculture (Thirty-eighth Congress); appointed by President Abraham Lincoln brigadier general of volunteers and saw battle during the Civil War; deranged and charged with financial irregularities, Lane shot himself on July 1, 1866, but lingered ten days, dying on July 11, near Fort Leavenworth, Kans.; interment in the City Cemetery, Lawrence, Kans.

Hawley, Lorene Anderson, *Kansas Imprints, 1854-1876, A Supplement*, 11, one location, Kansas Historical Society, not in OCLC, not in Eberstadt



Topeka, Kansas Territory, Council of Safety, **CIRCULAR. Council Chamber, Topeka, Kansas, June 9th, 1856.**

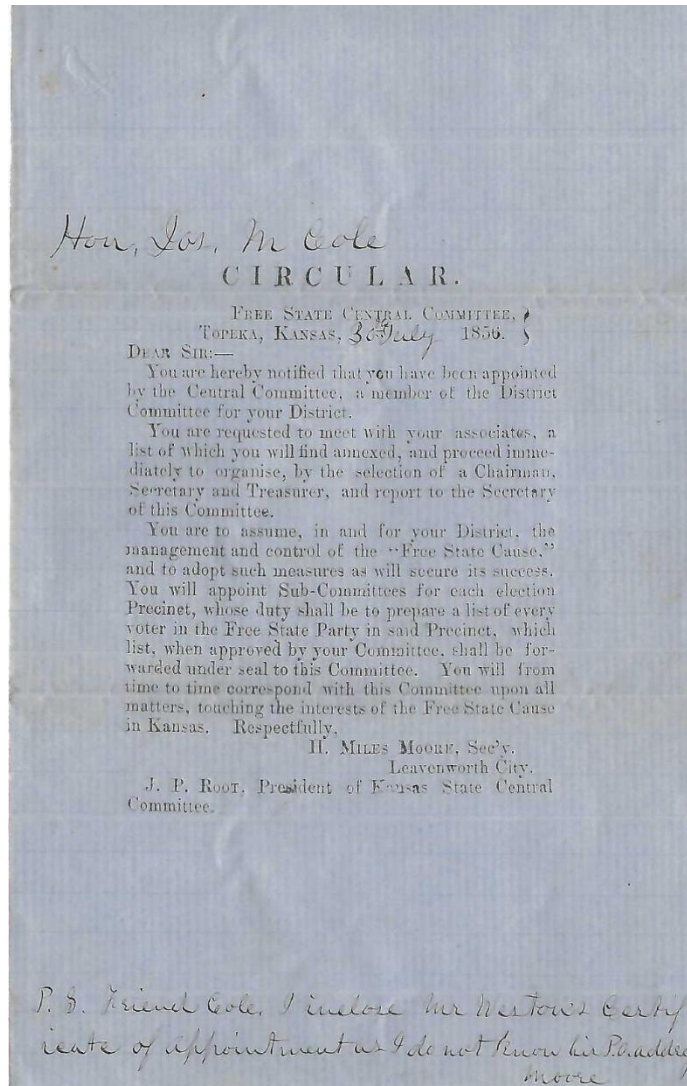
Sir, The Council of Safety at Topeka, with the advice and concurrence of the Committee of Safety at Lawrence, and other prominent citizens throughout Kansas, respectfully announce that there will be a **GRAND MASS CONVENTION** of the Free State Party at Topeka on THURSDAY THE THIRD DAY OF JULY NEXT. You are earnestly requested to use your influence in having EVERY FRE STATE MAN in your LOCALITY PRESENT at Topeka on that Occasion, in order that ALL may take council together concerning the state of Public Affairs and the perils of the times.

It is requested that each locality may send at least one person to Topeka on the day preceeding (Wednesday, July 2d,) for the purpose of devising action for the Convention of Thursday, Yours for Free Kansas.

[Signed in type] By C.[yrus] K.[urtz] Holliday and ten others.

[Topeka] 1856, quarto, printed circular, measuring 8 ½ x 6 ¾ inches, formerly folded, printed in several fonts, few small spots at base of sheet, otherwise very good.

American Imprints Inventory: No 10. Check List of Kansas Imprints 1854 – 1876, 85, one location, Kansas Historical Society. OCLC locates two additional copies, Boston Athenaeum, and Washburn University. Not in Eberstadt



Free State Central Committee, Topeka, Kansas Territory, **CIRCULAR. Free State Central Committee, Topeka, Kansas**, [30th July, in mss] **1856**. Dear Sir:- You are hereby notified that you have been appointed by the Central Committee, a member of the District Committee of Your District.

You are requested to meet with your associates, a list of which you will find annexed, and proceed immediately to organize, by the selection of a Chairman, Secretary and Treasurer, and report to the Secretary of this Committee.

You are to assume, in and for your District, the management and control of the "Free State Cause," and to adopt such measures as will secure its success. You will appoint Sub-Committees for each election Precinct, whose duty shall be to prepare a list of every voter in the Free State Party in said Precinct,

which list, when approved by your Committee, shall be forwarded under seal to this Committee. You will from time to time correspond with this Committee upon all matters, touching the Free State Cause in Kansas. Respectfully, H. Miles Moore, Sec'y. Leavenworth City. J. P. Root, President of Kansas State Central Committee.

[Topeka] 1856, printed circular letter, printed on one page of a folding letter sheet, measuring 7 7/8 x 5 1/8 inches, printed on blue paper stock, folded, accompanied by original mailing envelope.

This circular was sent to Joseph M. Cole, in Indianola, the second leaf carries a manuscript letter to Cole, from H. Miles Moore, which reads as follows:

"Leavenworth City July 30th, 1856

Hon. Jos. M. Cole

Dear Sir,

Inclosed please find a certificate of your appointment as a member of the 8th District Committee; also instructions as to your duties &c. In addition to obtaining a complete list of the "Free State Voters" in your District, the Committee desire that you should also at the same time prepare a list of all the Voters in your District, as nears as may be, both Free-State, Pro-Slavery and Doubtful, - following the Form on the next page. Below I give the names of the other members of the Com. In your District.

Richard Murphy, Indianola

Jas B. Weston

Yours Respectfully

H. Miles Moore

Sect. K.S. Cent. Com."

[The form above mentioned, is supplied in Moore's hand on the last page]

Not located in *American Imprints Inventory: No 10. Check List of Kansas Imprints 1854 – 1876*, or Supplement. Not in OCLC. Not in Eberstadt

H. Miles Moore was a Kansas pioneer, founder of Leavenworth, the first city incorporated in Kansas, and active in the Free State Party and Free Kansas cause.

Whereas there is reason to believe from the conduct of certain lawless and unprincipled persons residing in and near the borders of Missouri, that an armed invasion is intended against the peaceable citizens of Kansas Territory and for the purpose of repelling such invasion and for the purpose of protecting our families and property from such invasion, We the undersigned unite in organizing a military band to be governed by such officers as a majority of us shall elect and to hold ourselves in readiness at all times to assemble at the call of our officers to repel any armed invasion from whatever quarter.

persons Names

1 Joseph M. Cole	14 Thomas Lemare
2 Robert M. Nown	15 Jonathan Mitchel
3 Richard Murphy	16 John Dancewood
4 P. D. Copee	17 H. B. Comerod
5 David Milne	18 Timothy Downing
6 Lawrence Murphy	19 Daniel Downing
7 J. F. Jenner	20 M. K. Wingarefer
8 C. C. Leonard	21 J. D. Toub
9 C. C. Digenes	22 J. B. Chapman
10 Samuel J. Reeder	23 Hiram House
11 Daniel Horlow	Augustus H. Barnard
12 Frederick Swigce	
13 Ths. Jenner	

[Cole, Joseph M.] Manuscript Document forming a “military band” for self-defense, against pro-slavery forces, circa 1856:

Quarto, one page, formerly folded, written in ink by Cole and signed by him, and twenty-three others, in ink or pencil.

“Whereas there is reason to believe from the conduct of certain lawless and unprincipled persons residing in and near the borders of Missouri that an armed invasion is intended against the peaceable citizens of Kansas Territory and for the purpose of repelling such invasion and for the purpose of protecting our families and property from such invasion, We the undersigned unite in organizing a military band to be governed by such officers as a majority of us shall elect and to hold ourselves in readiness at all times to assemble at the call of our officers to repel any armed invasion from whatever quarter - ...”

Signed by Joseph M. Cole and 23 others, including Robert McNow, Richard Murphy, P. D. Copee, David Milne, Lawrence Murphy, J. F. Jenner, C. C. Leonard, C. C. Digenes, Samuel J. Reeder, Daniel Horlow, Frederick Swigce, Ths. Jenner, Thomas Lemare, Jonathan Mitchel, John Dancewood, Timothy Downing, Daniel Downing, M. K. Wingarefer, J. D. Toub, J. B. Chapman, Hiram House, Augustus H. Barnard

This document is written in the hand of Joseph M. Cole and his is the first signature, he was later elected captain of this militia unit.

The remaining items in the collection pertain to Frank A. Root, of Topeka, and Eliza M. Cole, Joseph Cole's widow, in one of the letters Root writes to his grandson, sending him the current group of papers, ("... you are getting the cream of the crop...") which were among the few in remaining in his possession after a flood in Topeka some years earlier. Root states that "*so many of my relics and souvenirs were destroyed in the flood would now be highly valuable.*" Root was the author of *The Overland Stage to California*, published in Topeka in 1901, (see Howes R-434). He was also a newspaper publisher in Kansas and in Gunnison, Colorado. Includes promotional materials for his Overland Stage book.

sold

1. Kanesville is the present-day Council Bluffs, its name was changed in 1853, it was an important point on the Mormon Trail.
2. <https://www.josephsmithpapers.org/person/orson-hyde>
3. <https://www.josephsmithpapers.org/search?query=Louis+%28Lewis%29+Rice+Chaffin&types=documents-papers-financial%7Cdocuments-papers-administrative%7Cdocuments-papers-documents%7Cdocuments-papers%7Crelated-materials%7Cbiographical-directory%7Cgeographical-directory%7Cglossary%7Cevent&page=1>
4. <https://www.josephsmithpapers.org/person/almon-whiting-babbitt>
5. <https://www.josephsmithpapers.org/search?query=Charles+Warner&types=documents-papers-administrative%7Cdocuments-papers-financial%7Cdocuments-papers-histories%7Cdocuments-papers-documents%7Cdocuments-papers-legal%7Cdocuments-papers%7Crelated-materials%7Cbiographical-directory%7Cgeographical-directory%7Cglossary%7Cevent&page=1>
6. <https://www.josephsmithpapers.org/person/peter-haws>