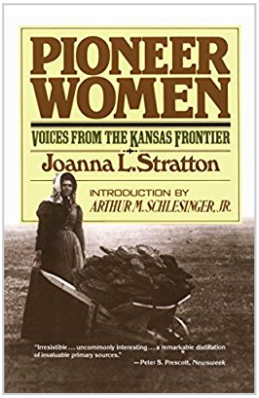

Pioneer Women: Voices from the Kansas Frontier

By Joanna Stratton

Pioneer Women: Voices from the Kansas Frontier By Joanna Stratton

From a rediscovered collection of autobiographical accounts written by hundreds of Kansas pioneer women in the early twentieth century, Joanna Stratton has created a collection hailed by *Newsweek* as “uncommonly interesting” and “a remarkable distillation of primary sources.”

Never before has there been such a detailed record of women’s courage, such a living portrait of the women who civilized the American frontier. Here are their stories: wilderness mothers, schoolmarms, Indian squaws, immigrants, homesteaders, and circuit riders. Their personal recollections of prairie fires, locust plagues, cowboy shootouts, Indian raids, and blizzards on the plains vividly reveal the drama, danger and excitement of the pioneer experience.

These were women of relentless determination, whose tenacity helped them to conquer loneliness and privation. Their work was the work of survival, it demanded as much from them as from their men—and at last that partnership has been recognized. “These voices are haunting” (*The New York Times Book Review),* and they reveal the special heroism and industriousness of pioneer women as never before.

Pioneer Women: Voices from the Kansas Frontier

By Joanna Stratton

Pioneer Women: Voices from the Kansas Frontier By Joanna Stratton

From a rediscovered collection of autobiographical accounts written by hundreds of Kansas pioneer women in the early twentieth century, Joanna Stratton has created a collection hailed by *Newsweek* as “uncommonly interesting” and “a remarkable distillation of primary sources.”

Never before has there been such a detailed record of women’s courage, such a living portrait of the women who civilized the American frontier. Here are their stories: wilderness mothers, schoolmarms, Indian squaws, immigrants, homesteaders, and circuit riders. Their personal recollections of prairie fires, locust plagues, cowboy shootouts, Indian raids, and blizzards on the plains vividly reveal the drama, danger and excitement of the pioneer experience.

These were women of relentless determination, whose tenacity helped them to conquer loneliness and privation. Their work was the work of survival, it demanded as much from them as from their men—and at last that partnership has been recognized. “These voices are haunting” (*The New York Times Book Review),* and they reveal the special heroism and industriousness of pioneer women as never before.

Pioneer Women: Voices from the Kansas Frontier By Joanna Stratton Bibliography

- Sales Rank: #301307 in Books
- Brand: Stratton, Joanna L.
- Published on: 1982-09-17
- Released on: 1982-09-17
- Original language: English
- Number of items: 1
- Dimensions: 9.25" h x 1.10" w x 6.12" l, .90 pounds
- Binding: Paperback
- 320 pages

Editorial Review

Review
Peter S. Prescott *Newsweek* Irresistible...uncommonly interesting...a remarkable distillation of invaluable primary sources.

Carolyn See *Los Angeles Times Book Review* Here are the voices of some of the most wonderful women you can imagine calling out from the past, telling about their lives. And no doubt about it, the 'pioneer women' lived eventful lives. All this is wonderful material, wonderful stuff.

Cleveland Plain Dealer A striking testimonial to the too often overlooked feminine half of the pioneer experience.

About the Author
Joanna L. Stratton was born and raised in Washington, DC, but considers Kansas and her family there as her second home. She began her work on *Pioneer Women* while attending Harvard College, from which she graduated with honors in 1976. She is currently pursuing graduate studies at Stanford University.

CHAPTER ONE

To the Stars Through the Wilderness

The Journey

"Pioneering is really a wilderness experience. We all need the wisdom of the wilderness -- Moses did, Jesus did, and Paul did. The wilderness is the place to find God, and the city is the place to study the multitude; a knowledge of both makes master builders for the state and nation."

Lulu Fuhr

They called it "the Great American Desert." In the eyes of early explorers, Kansas appeared to be little more than an arid wasteland, unfit for cultivation and unsuitable for habitation. As a result, the Kansas wilderness remained relatively unknown until the middle of the nineteenth century. Originally a part of the Louisiana Purchase, it had been strictly maintained by the government as an Indian territory and as such was officially closed to any white settlement. Only a trickle of missionaries, soldiers, and surveyors were allowed to penetrate this barren, unfamiliar landscape.

But by 1850 an ever-increasing population and a growing economy focused attention on the country's need for new land. Expansive and promising, the Great Plains seemed to answer the call of a nation, and in May 1854 Congress, after considerable debate, passed the Kansas-Nebraska Act. With Kansas and Nebraska now open to settlement, a homesteading fever swept across the country. In Kansas alone, there were nearly fifty million acres of virgin grassland for the taking. People of all backgrounds and nationalities, rich or poor, were entitled to stake their claims and own a share of these untried plains.

Within months, settlers from the East, the South, the Midwest and even foreign countries streamed into the

prairie heartland. Excited by the cheap land and the new opportunities to be found there, they bravely said goodbye to friends and family and abandoned every routine and comfort of their old lives.

"How our friends crowded around us at parting," wrote Lillie Marcks about her family's departure from Tiffin, Ohio, in May 1869. "Some cried and talked of Indians and bears. I was seven years old, had been staying with friends in Tiffin three weeks and they felt so badly about my going west and had me so beautifully dressed that even my father and mother scarcely knew me....

"I recall my mother's headaches on the trip, and many children dirty and cross, and how we longed for the journey's end."

Like thousands of other women, Melora Espy gave up the security of family ties and old friendships for the promise of a new life in Kansas. "In the year 1853," wrote her biographer, "a young girl of seventeen, even then the Principal of a Young Ladies School in Toledo, Ohio, joined her fortunes with those of her lover, Henry Jefferson Espy, a young lawyer of Sandusky, Ohio; resigned her position as teacher, and went over the Long Trail to become one of the pioneer women of Kansas. To leave permanently one's home and friends, parents, brothers and sisters; to journey a thousand miles, part of the way in an ox wagon, part of the way in a steamboat of the early time, to a strange land inhabited by savages, requires the greatest courage. To forsake culture, plenty, prosperity and peace, for crude living, poverty, adversity and war, requires a poise of soul few possess."

Despite the anguish of parting and the tedium of the long journey west, pioneers continued to emigrate by covered wagon, horseback, stagecoach, steamboat, railroad, and even by foot. For many pioneers the water routes proved to be particularly convenient. After journeying to the nearest departure points along the Ohio or Mississippi River, they boarded steamboats that churned up the Missouri to Kansas. The boats were crowded, the progress was slow and the trip was tedious, but the steamboat remained the most comfortable means of travel, avoiding the jolting passage of the plodding wagons and stages.

As migration increased, the stagecoach became more popular. "The old stagecoach," recalled one passenger, "was built along the lines you so often see now in frontier pictures -- two wide seats inside facing each other and a driver's seat high up on the outside front of the vehicle. The baggage was carried on racks at the back and on top. The bottom of the coach was rounded and hung on springs that caused it to rock back and forth in a swaying motion. It was drawn by four horses which were changed every twelve or fifteen miles at stations along the way."

The stagecoach was particularly convenient for the woman emigrant, alone or with children, who followed friends and family westward. However, the trip often proved to be a grueling journey over rough and rutted roads.

In 1867, Carrie Stearns Smith traveled by stagecoach from Kansas City, Missouri, to her new home south of Fort Scott. It was a tiring journey, but also one of adventure and spectacle.

"The stage station," she wrote, "was at a hotel I seem to recall as The Pacific....The stage swung around a corner with a great circling sweep of eight white horses, accoutered in all of harness and ornaments that could catch the sun and the eye. I have often been quizzed as to this statement of eight horses, but I cannot be mistaken; eight seems a superfluity but *there were eight.* It might have been an extra span was being driven to some station below to anticipate a future need of relays. The stage was a Vermont Sanderson, said to be the pioneer stage from coast to coast.

"At last we were all listed and crowded in -- wedged would better express the arrangement. The driver cracked his whip and away dashed the beautiful horses. I had been placed by the station agent in the care of a passenger they accosted as Governor Crawford, a slight invalid-appearing man, wearing a shawl, a fashion not then quite out of vogue. It occurred to me it would have been more appropriate to place the delicate traveler in my care, for he surely appeared the more likely of us two to succumb to the effects of rapid stage travel.

"Our route led south over Westport Road to our first mail station at Westport House, where with a great flourish and clatter of hoofs, we drew up alongside and an exchange of mail bags occurred. Then ho for Shawnee Mission, where at one of the huge original buildings, like formalities were observed. The dashing up and the dashing away from these stations was worthy of a king's retinue, an event that drew small crowds from the immediate vicinity.

"Our route was by no means the shortest distance between more important settlements. We diverged to the southeast and southwest here and there for the delivery of mail or the more practicable fording of streams. Whenever we halted for relays of horses, the traces were loosened, and the released spans marched unled to their long low shed barns, and those to be driven marched each to his accustomed place in front of the stage -- not an animal led or driven. Two or three minutes only were consumed in the exchange....

"We reached Paola just at dusk. The hotel was a rude rambling one-story affair, and soon after supper, when fairly abed and about to fall asleep, the sounds of fiddles in the dining-room told that a country dance was beginning. All the sleeping rooms seemed to open out of the dining-room. I occupied one with a lady on her way east to Pleasant Hill. Though very tired, the fiddles, the stamping of stoutly shod feet on the rough floor, and perhaps the excitement attendant on new experiences, kept me awake until 3 A.M., and it seemed I had only caught the merest wink of sleep after dancing ceased, when loud knocking at our door and 'stage leaving!' aroused me.

"I had always been able to dress with real speed, but when I reached the stage at the door, the agent gasped, 'Why, every seat is taken!' And no one of the several men inside offered a solution of the problem. So as I lifted mine eyes to the driver's seat, I managed to beg 'Could I sit with the driver?' The agent put the petition to the one aloft. 'Why, sure,' and I was pulled and hoisted to the seat. I secretly rejoiced. The previous day the presence of a sick child in the stage, poorly cared for by evidently very poor mountain people from Tennessee, had made the journey perforce most disagreeable because of the odor and flies.

"Away we dashed, I Fairly holding my breath and the railing at the end of my seat. But the sensation of swift motion and aloftness, the keen air of the October morning's dawn, the unusualness and the unexpectedness of that phase of my journey -- it was intoxicating!...

"At one point we had forded a stream with a border of brush, and rounding a hill across the ford he [the driver] pointed to a small new grave. Such a sadness possessed me, as I pictured to myself the delay in camp, the suffering of the little one, the absence of medical skill, the death, the burial, and the grief of leaving that freshly heaped mound. But hundreds of such mounds have marked the advance of pioneers. And what stories of grief do they suggest to those travelers who have passed that way."

Later that day, when the Sanderson stagecoach arrived at Fort Scott, Carrie Stearns Smith climbed down from her scenic seat in order to change to another, southbound coach. There was a disappointing delay of a day and a half before an "oilcloth-covered Democrat stage" pulled in for her at four o'clock in the morning.

"I was helped inside and in the darkness we rattled out of the 'Fort,' my only company a roll of freshly tanned

leather, the size of a big person's body, placed diagonally across the seats.

"On we clattered, finally crossing several miles of timber on Dry-wood Creek and at its farthest edge we drew up in the dawn to a log hotel, Here was breakfast. I was chilled by the early ride and asked the Dutch proprietress if I might go into the kitchen to warm. As I drew near the kitchen stove, the swarms of flies on the low ceiling flew down and back with bzz-zz-zz-zz! The housefrau came out with knives and forks from the table where an earlier stage's passengers had eaten, swung around the tea kettle lid and thrust the articles of tableware into the boiling water, hastily drying them on a cloth. 'Heavens!' was my mental ejaculation. 'And I bet on a penny she makes the coffee from that identical kettle.' She did; and I vowed to refrain from coffee, but I was so frozen I verily believe I should have broken that vow if three times that unwashed cutlery had been immersed in that kettle.

"The driver and I breakfasted alone and exchanged brief sentences. Excellent bread, no butter; but lifting the last slice revealed a big grown specimen of cimex lectolarius -- familiarly known as bedbug!...

"By now the sun was well up. I had made slight acquaintance with the driver, a man of 35 to 40, and I ventured: 'I find the leather unbearable. Cannot I sit in front?' He was quite agreeable. Now I found a different type of prairie, and passing and leaving the few settlers' shacks near Arcadia, we followed the old military road over a barren, treeless stretch of thirty or more miles. There were roving herds of cattle, here and there a bloated carcass. I inquired; 'Flies,' said Mr. Laconic, and further perseverance on my part drew out the details of how an animal, ill-conditioned, often became the victim of concentrated hordes of flies that should have more impartially divided their assiduous attentions among the herd, until the poor beast succumbed, and finally became the most conspicuous object in the landscape. It did not enthuse me at all, even though assured this was bound to become a great stock country.

"Much of the uninteresting stretch passed over that day was later opened up as a great mining region. At this time, however, coal had been found cropping out along creeks or draws in very small quantities, such spots being much favored by campers as furnishing fuel for the campfire where no wood was found.

"The Old Military Road claimed my unaffected interest. For years over this road military supplies had been freighted from Fort Leavenworth, Westport and Missouri points to Fort Worth, Texas, and other places to the southwest. Great herds of cattle and ponies were driven north over this trail. The freightage had been so heavy that for long stretches great cracks had been opened between wheel tracks and often so deep a man's walking stick could be thrust downward and not find bottom. One track had been abandoned, another used until impracticable, then a third, until in places as many as ten or twelve were in existence -- all equally worn. This trail is historic, and at one point at least in Crawford County, at Mulberry, where the state line and the public road coincide for a distance with the old trail, the Daughters of the Revolution have placed a tablet commemorating the Old Military Road.

"My driver, after a prolonged interval of silence, mused aloud: 'I suppose I will be hauling you back in about three weeks.' Heavens! 'hauling.' I had never heard the word except as to hauling logs to a mill by chains. Again I queried, delicately. 'Oh, I hauled two young women down to Baxter Springs last summer. They claimed they were going to stay -- settlers. But I notice I hauled them back again, over this very road.' My vocabulary was beginning to add new words unto itself."

In the 1860s, a new kind of "hauling" was becoming popular in Kansas: the Kansas Pacific Railroad. Both the Civil War and a growing frontier industry and agriculture had spurred the demand for a transcontinental railroad, and Congress complied, launching, in 1862, the concurrent construction of the Central Pacific eastward from Sacramento and the Union Pacific westward from Omaha. Authorized as a branch of the

Union Pacific, the Kansas Pacific line was soon chartered to connect Kansas City and Denver, and by 1863 construction was under way. Advancing rapidly across the state, this system established regular passenger service between Kansas City and Lawrence as early as 1864 and had proceeded westward through Manhattan, Abilene, Salina and Ellsworth by 1867. Slicing straight through Hays and across miles of barren Indian country, the Kansas Pacific finally reached Denver by 1870.

It was in its first year of operation that Mrs. Henry Inman discovered that this spanking new means of transportation was not without its perils.

"In January, 1868, I left my home for Fort Harker, Kansas," she wrote. "In that day the facilities for traveling were not accompanied with the comforts of the present time, but all went fairly well until we reached East St. Louis. There was no bridge then over the Mississippi River, and at midnight I walked over the ice to a boat which took us to St. Louis proper. From there we journeyed on to Salina, Kansas, where our train was waiting to bear us on to Fort Harker, then the terminus of the Union Pacific Railroad.

"It was snowing slightly, but the storm increased, and although Secretary Coburn denounces the word 'blizzard,' with apologies to him I can substitute no other to express the conditions of the storm we rode into. I had seen picturesque ones in New England, but never where the snow seemed to come from every direction, up as well as down, and seventeen miles west of Salina we became snowbound. The drifts proved too much for our faithful engineer and his engine. So we were left on the open prairie to the mercies of the elements, with complete time for reflection and one entire side of our train buried in snow.

"One passenger car was all we boasted, and I often recall the personnel of that one. Railroad employees, land-seekers -- namely 'squatters' as they were then called -- furloughed soldiers returning to their respective posts and I, the only woman among them, with a child two years old.

"I often wish I had registered the name of every man, for each one seemed in sympathy with me and made every effort that the situation afforded to do some one little service for our comfort. Yet in a small way I made a slight return and this is how it came about.

"The commanding officer at Fort Harker (for the storm had reached there) anticipated the situation [and], knowing that I was on the train, [managed] to get word to me to this effect: I was to use with discretion anything for my comfort and others' with me that I might find in a freight car attached to our train, consigned to the commissary at the Fort. We were here thirty-six hours, and from the first the outlook had been so discouraging that a much less suggestion toward relief would have made me quite happy, so I commenced housekeeping at once.

"'Uncle Sam' provided bacon and crackers, and the tin washbasin, which had already served the purpose for which it was originally intended, was washed in snow water and was entrusted to no one but myself, the bacon fried in it (and I have never eaten any that tasted better). And our dessert was a little surprise from me. I had brought with me several mince pies (New England ones), carefully packed in my trunk that when my first meal was served in my new home, some one familiar dish would be in evidence. After counting noses I cut the pies so each might have his share, being careful to keep a reserve in case another night of anxiety awaited us -- and we soon had occasion to make use of this.

"What we thought an immense drift near the car proved to be a tent. And as the conductor had been regaling us with stories of the border and Indian massacres, one of which had taken place near where we were only a short time previous to this, my anxiety lest I should meet a similar late of those who had fallen victims was far above normal, when to my relief two railroad laborers, with their horses, broke through the snow,

manifesting surprise and delight on finding a refuge so near at hand. One of the horses died but the men seemed in lair condition. As is usual in Kansas, our latch-spring was out, the fire resuscitated, reserve brought forth, and two more made comfortable.

"Late that afternoon our conductor came with the cheerful intelligence that smoke could be seen in the distance, which meant our troubles were nearing an end. A platform car with twenty men provided with shovels literally shoveled us out, took us back to Salina, and Mother Bickerdyke, who had her home near the station, cared for me until I could go on, which was in two or three days."

Stagecoaches and railroad trains were convenient for the traveler with few possessions in tow, but for whole families the covered wagon was the most practical and economical means of travel. In a flurry of activity before departure, the wagons were tightly packed with those provisions needed to sustain the family on the long journey; possessions that could not be packed were usually sold. Wedged into the wagon were household utensils -- such as skillets and kettles, pewter dishware, lanterns, churns, cookstoves and linens; and farming implements -- axes, hoes, saws, hammers and the family plow. Guns and ammunition were also brought along, for hunting and for personal protection. Finally, the travelers painstakingly packed supplies of food and water, including such staples as flour, sugar, salt, bacon, beans, yeast, and vinegar. Occasionally even livestock were tethered to the caravan.

Over the years the prairie schooner -- so called because it looked, with its long sturdy frame and high white canopy, like a ship sailing through a sea of grass -- became a familiar sight on the frontier. Drawn by a team of horses or hardy oxen, the wagon made its way westward at a slow, walking pace. Usually, the mother and the younger children rode aboard it, while the father and the older children followed alongside. They journeyed on for days and weeks at a time, traveling by day and camping by night and finding sustenance in the fellowship of other travelers.

"There were five covered wagons in our party," recalled Mrs. Edson Baxter. "During our journey we cooked our meals over the fire, Indian fashion, and had a piece of oil cloth spread on the ground for a table; at night some slept in the wagons and others made beds on the ground....We had only one rain storm, and as we were camped near a house the people kindly let the women and children sleep in their house that night....

"Occasionally a horse would get sick, and then it was necessary to lay over for a day, so we would take the big cook stove from father's wagon, which he insisted on bringing to Kansas with him, and set it up, for we always took advantage of such an opportunity to wash and bake. We spent the evenings in talking, telling stories, and singing, and sometimes we would take a walk through towns near where we were camped."

Mrs. Baxter's party was fortunate in having to endure only one rain storm. Often the weather brought heavy winds, sleet or rain. Wheels mired in mud or axles snapped in two meant a sudden halt until repairs could be made. And there were other dangers as well. Beyond each bend was the likelihood of accidents and injuries of all sorts. A broken leg, a snakebite or a cholera outbreak was particularly serious on the trail, where medical help was unavailable. Inevitably, death took its toll among the emigrants, and for the family forced to bury and leave a loved one along the way, these sad moments seemed unbearable.

"Many times I have heard my mother tell of the experiences of the trip," recalled Leslye Hardman Womer. "One that stands out clearly in my memory happened one evening just at sunset, where they had chosen their campsite by a pretty little wooded creek. Just as the fires were well started, another wagon drove up and the folks asked to be allowed to share the beautiful spot for the night. Of course they were always glad to have company and my unmarried aunts were particularly pleased to see a young lady about their own age in the wagon. Visions of a pleasant evening of story telling and singing to the accompaniment of my father's banjo,

was in their minds.

"The girls walked around together for a while, talking the usual girl talk, then it began to grow dusk. They remembered the unprepared supper where their help was no doubt needed. The young lady left my aunts and ran lightly toward their own camp fire, swinging her sunbonnet. To reach their fire she had to pass the wagon where the two large horses were tied. As she passed she playfully hit one of the horses with her bonnet and instantly a foot shot out and the girl fell without a sound with a terrible gash in her temple made by the sharp hoof of the horse. She never moved again and was quite dead when her lather reached her.

"There was little rest in the little camp that night, and in the early morning a grave was made beside the trail where the body of the young girl was tenderly laid. For a few days the stricken family traveled with my family, but the way soon parted and they never saw or heard of them again."

Finally, the traveler in covered wagon or railroad car or stagecoach would arrive in the county of her destination and face the last lap of her arduous journey. For Lillie Marcks, the seven-year-old whose neighbors had dressed her in finery for the trip, Stranger Station was the gateway to the Kansas prairie. It seemed, at first sight, full of wonders. "[We] were met with lumber wagons to take the entire party to the Bastian home about four miles north on Stranger Creek. Of one thing I am sure, to my mother and me it was a real lark. The road ran along Stranger Creek north, and such a wilderness of willow and other trees, grape vines and hazel brush. Mother would say, 'Oh, how beautiful.'

"As we drove on the prairie, Mother and I could hardly stay in the wagon. The wild flowers covered the prairies in a riot of colours like a beautiful rug. How we longed to gather some. And the gravel beds were new to us.

"And then the hired man said, 'Now we are home already,' and everybody talked, laughed and were happy at a long journey's end. We found waiting for us kind neighbors: long tables of boards were set up out-doors and were soon loaded with food. I did not care about eating, wanted to go back to the flowers and gravel. Took all the children, and such a happy time we had with lovely wild flowers everywhere."

Less happy was the story of Martha Lick Wooden, whose husband and sons had already staked a claim and who arrived at Fort Hays with her two little girls to join them in June of 1878. Her daughter remembered:

"It was night and she was at a loss to know what to do, for she had expected to be met at the train by her husband, He had failed to arrive. She went to a hotel -- the best the little town had, but before registering she asked to see the bedroom she was to occupy. She removed the pillow and turned down the sheet and pointed to a bedbug! She refused to stay in that hostelry. Finding another boarding-house, she put up for the night, but declared she was already disgusted with Kansas.

"The next morning early her husband found her back at the railroad station walking up and down and probably wishing she might take the next train for the East, though she never would admit it. He had been delayed and had driven part of the night and yet had failed to meet his little family. There was a joyful time when he found them at the station that morning.

"As soon as the necessary supplies were loaded and the travelers and their baggage stowed in among the boxes and bags, the journey to the claim forty miles away was begun. There was a plain road winding across the prairie for a few miles, then it seemed to lose itself in the thick matted buffalo grass. Mr. Wooden had driven the trail before, and all went well while daylight lasted.

"A stop was made at noon to feed and rest the team, and Mrs. Wooden got her first experience in cooking over a campfire. No more stops were made. Just at dusk the team suddenly began a steep descent and one of those western 'draws' or canyons opened up before her astonished eyes. Nothing like this had she ever seen before, and it was as wonderful as the Grand Canyon of the Colorado seemed to her years after. Darkness deepened rapidly in the canyon and the trail was difficult to follow. Somewhere in its windings the driver made the wrong turn, and after going on for perhaps a half hour, he said, 'Well, I guess I'm lost.'

"'Lost! Out here on this lonely prairie? And what is that?' said his wife with more of nervous apprehension in her voice than she realized. 'That what? Oh, I guess you hear the coyotes,' he answered. Of all the eerie, dreary experiences, to be lost at night on the prairie on which she had not seen a single habitation all day, then to hear the chorus of coyotes, like hyenas, laughing at one's predicament, this surely was the dreariest.

"Mr. Wooden, who had become more or less prairie wise by this time, turned his team and with lantern in hand, walked ahead of the team as she drove, back to the draw where the wrong turn had been made. After some difficulty the right road -- little more than a wagon track -- was found and soon the lights of home flashed out."

What force compelled these many travelers to forsake the comforts of their Eastern homes and journey hundreds of miles away into this giant, empty wilderness? What motivated them to endure willingly the seasonal vicissitudes of nature and the daily uncertainties of an uncivilized frontier? Was it the promise of a new life that lured them or some mystical spirit of adventure?

"My memory," wrote Mrs. W. B. Caton, "goes back almost fifty years to a humble home with the library table strewn with literature extolling the wonderful advantages of the new haven for immigrants -- Kansas. To me it spelled destruction, desperadoes, and cyclones. I could not agree with my husband that any good could come out of such a country, but the characteristic disposition of the male prevailed, and October 1, 1879, saw us -- a wagon, three horses, and our humble household necessities -- bound for the 'Promised Land.'

"To say I wept bitterly would but faintly express the ocean of tears I shed on leaving my beloved home and state to take up residence in the 'wild and wooly West.' However, my fears vanished as we traveled toward our Mecca.

"We arrived in Winfield one beautiful Sabbath morning, and to the ringing of the church bells, we wended our way through the attractive hamlet to...a beautiful spot on a mound south of the town. As we gazed with rapture over the beautiful valley, encircled by a fine stream of water, we felt that instead of the wild West, we had found God's own country, and were quite content to accept it as our future home."

Beautiful and bountiful, the land was the great lure of Kansas. Some settlers sought freedom, some yearned for prosperity, some craved adventure, but in the end it was the promise of the land that drew them halfway across a continent. Here they could build their own homes, cultivate their own fields and develop their own communities. Undoubtedly, it took a special kind of fortitude to adjust to this harsh terrain. Yet with hard work, imagination and tenacity, the future was theirs to mold. In this new land, God's own country, they reached to the stars through the wilderness.

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Alan Fan:

Now a day people that Living in the era wherever everything reachable by interact with the internet and the resources inside it can be true or not need people to be aware of each information they get. How a lot more to be smart in acquiring any information nowadays? Of course the solution is reading a book. Reading a book can help men and women out of this uncertainty Information specifically this Pioneer Women: Voices from the Kansas Frontier book since this book offers you rich data and knowledge. Of course the info in this book hundred per cent guarantees there is no doubt in it as you know.

Jason Serrano:

This Pioneer Women: Voices from the Kansas Frontier are reliable for you who want to be described as a successful person, why. The reason of this Pioneer Women: Voices from the Kansas Frontier can be one of several great books you must have will be giving you more than just simple examining food but feed a person with information that maybe will shock your earlier knowledge. This book is definitely handy, you can bring it almost everywhere and whenever your conditions throughout the e-book and printed types. Beside that this Pioneer Women: Voices from the Kansas Frontier forcing you to have an enormous of experience for example rich vocabulary, giving you trial run of critical thinking that we realize it useful in your day activity. So , let's have it appreciate reading.

Duane Vega:

As we know that book is essential thing to add our expertise for everything. By a e-book we can know everything we would like. A book is a range of written, printed, illustrated or perhaps blank sheet. Every year was exactly added. This publication Pioneer Women: Voices from the Kansas Frontier was filled about science. Spend your spare time to add your knowledge about your science competence. Some people has several feel when they reading some sort of book. If you know how big good thing about a book, you can experience enjoy to read a guide. In the modern era like now, many ways to get book that you wanted.

Russell Pittman:

That e-book can make you to feel relax. This book Pioneer Women: Voices from the Kansas Frontier was colorful and of course has pictures around. As we know that book Pioneer Women: Voices from the Kansas Frontier has many kinds or genre. Start from kids until young adults. For example Naruto or Private eye Conan you can read and feel that you are the character on there. Therefore , not at all of book are usually make you bored, any it can make you feel happy, fun and unwind. Try to choose the best book for yourself and try to like reading in which.

Read Pioneer Women: Voices from the Kansas Frontier By Joanna Stratton for online ebook

Pioneer Women: Voices from the Kansas Frontier By Joanna Stratton Free PDF d0wnl0ad, audio books, books to read, good books to read, cheap books, good books, online books, books online, book reviews epub, read books online, books to read online, online library, greatbooks to read, PDF best books to read, top books to read Pioneer Women: Voices from the Kansas Frontier By Joanna Stratton books to read online.

Online Pioneer Women: Voices from the Kansas Frontier By Joanna Stratton ebook PDF download

Pioneer Women: Voices from the Kansas Frontier By Joanna Stratton Doc

Pioneer Women: Voices from the Kansas Frontier By Joanna Stratton Mobipocket

Pioneer Women: Voices from the Kansas Frontier By Joanna Stratton EPub

3TIM2VZCAXL: Pioneer Women: Voices from the Kansas Frontier By Joanna Stratton