

A LETTER FROM EUREKA, KANSAS TO EVANSVILLE, WISCONSIN  
Dated 1 November 1886

The following letter was found in the Eager family papers. It is not known to whom the letter was written, as it was addressed to "dear friend." It is thought that the letter was written to Almeron Eager, as he was communicating with people who were shipping cattle to Evansville for sale, specifically his brothers Alvin and Amos Eager who were residing in Nebraska.

The letter is being printed in the *Evansville Review* in the hope that other individuals may be able to supply information about F.P. Foster of Eureka and Mary Donnelly of Topeka, Kansas. Question: were there other Evansville residents, who had relationships with people residing in Eureka and Topeka, Kansas in 1886?

The following information is known. The letter was written on 1 November 1886 by F.P. Foster, who was residing in Eureka with his father, name not known, who had been in poor health for two years: "He is paralyzed. he has not been able to walk or stand alone for about two months. He is very bad now and he seems to be failing all the time. we have had 5 or 6 doctors and he has tried a battery but they do not seem to be do him any good."

F.P. apparently was residing separately with his mother. The father and son were raising crops and livestock near Eureka, Greenwood County. F.P. wrote: "I heard from ma a few day ago. she said it had been very dry up there. we had quite a dry spell here...we have not had any rain since August but we do not need any now. I raised pretty fair crops. I commenced feeding the cattle yesterday [November 1<sup>st</sup>]. pa and I together has about 45 head. we have 7 horses and I have a young sucking mule and a sucking colt. I was offered \$45.00 for my mule last Saturday."

F.P. added: "I suppose you know that Mary Donnelly is married. she now lives near Topeka. her husband runs a drug-store." F.P. heard from them quite frequently. Her maiden name, and relationship to the two men, is not known.

F.P. was pleased with his social environment, as he wrote: "We have it quite lively here. there is Lyceum every Wednesday night and about 2 dances a week." A Lyceum is a literary institution, lecture hall, or teaching place.

In conclusion, F.P. closed with the phrase: "I remain your True friend and correspondent."

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A search was initiated to collect more information about the author of this letter. My best guess is that 19 year-old Fred P. Foster was answering a business letter on behalf of his father, name unknown, who was in poor health.

A review of federal census records was my first strategy. Fred P. Foster was identified as a inhabitant of the 1900 U.S. Federal Census for Eureka City, 1<sup>st</sup> ward, Greenwood County. Fred was born in 1865 in England. He immigrated to the United States in 1868 as a child with his parents. He married in 1887 Effie M., an Illinois born female with New England roots (New York and Ohio). In 1900, Fred & his wife were residing in Eureka with their four children, all born in Kansas: Ollie born Nov. 1887, Clifford born Mar 1889, Ada born April 1891, and Shirley born 1893. Fred was employed as a dealer in livestock in Eureka.

By 1910, Fred had moved to Kansas City In 1910, 1920, and 1930, he was residing in Kansas City. In 1920 and 1930, he was associated with the stockyards as a hog buyer and feed buyer.

If Fred P. was the author of the initial letter, it appears he was corresponding with a potential customer. A familial relationship has not been determined.

*The original letter and transcription of the letter is on file at the Baker Museum for your review. The Museum is open every Saturday 1:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m. Please notify Jennifer Ehle 608-302-1722, [jenniferehle1@gmail.com](mailto:jenniferehle1@gmail.com) if you possess additional information about this letter or would like to discuss it.*

*Stay tuned to next week's article, which will contain the results of Bobbie Bradley's research on Fred's parents.*