

## Letter From

R. A. Carter

Cashier's Office,  
Geo. A. Fuller Constr. Co.  
Camp Funston, Kansas.

October 18, finished up the day with the Penna. Lines and by 8 p. m. was in a pullman headed for K. C. This job pays a hundred and twenty-five. I may be through next Saturday or I may be here two weeks longer. A few will be here until the first of the year. But I was one of the last getting here and of course will be the first in the office to be laid off. The steam fitters expect to be through the 15th inst., and the others are beginning to wind up now. The force is only 3,000 now while it was 10,000 just before I got here. The pay roll last Saturday was about eighty-five thousand, while it was three hundred thousand just previous to my arrival. We go to Junction City to make up the pay roll in a national bank there on Fridays, and pay off on Saturdays. Since the pay roll is reduced you can see the office force must be reduced very shortly. This work is entirely different from what I ever did before. It is statement work, uninteresting and gives no chance to show stenographic ability. Any kind of an old cheap stenographer could do this work. But I am glad I made the trip anyway. The knowledge of a cantonment in construction is something worth while. You have no idea of the extent of it, unless you have been to Rockford. This is much larger than Rockford, it is the largest in the U. S. in fact. The loop district in Chicago would not cover it. Our neighbor is Fort Riley, the geographical center of the map. That is about as large as Fort Sheridan, and there are many buildings on the road leading there, such as cavalry, laundry, stone quarries etc. This place is laid out like a city, and the roads around and in the cantonment are graded and made of crushed stone. Fort Riley is four miles away. The U. P. runs through the center of the cantonment and steam shovels are making viaducts under their tracks. So you see we are civilized and will have only a few grade crossings. The streets are full of traffic, and with the exception of a few scrapers, graders and dump wagons, horses are not used. Everything is motor driven. Big sheet iron bread wagons, garbage trucks, army trucks hauling every thing, all painted gray, seven or eight full-fledged fire departments with the latest type motor hose carts, just like Chicago. I have not seen any fire engines, though, as we have a strong pressure from four enormous tanks on the high bluff bounding the cantonment on the north. The Kaw River is the southern boundary about a mile and a half south. I saw a set of trenches on the banks of this river last Sunday. From descriptions I have read and pictures I have seen of European trenches, these are of the same pattern, even wooden steps leading way down into dugouts. Everything is military; guards everywhere in and around the cantonment. The reservation, which spreads around in a radi-

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us of several miles, however, is not guarded. We have interurban service with the nearby towns, which are booming, where there are plenty of good shows, etc., I am told. The barracks are all two-stories, and each one has its latrine, which has hot and cold shower. All buildings are steam heated, that is, where steam or heat is needed I counted eighteen heating plants with four stacks each, the other day, from the bluff. All steam mains and pipes are carried on poles instead of being laid underground. They are covered with several layers of asbestos, roofing etc. Water mains and sewerage is all under ground, however. General Wood is strong on sanitation and looks after the health of the boys first. Streams and streams of them drill by every morning heading for the drill grounds up over the bluff where they drill and learn all the details until dinner time. After dinner they are out again until dark. This is supposed to be a toughening process. This process also has its effects on the Fuller Company, too. The office force here goes to work at 7 a. m. and works until 6 p. m. Sometimes we have to work Sundays too. But the boys that make the big money are the skilled craft, such as carpenters, steam fitters, plumbers, truck drivers, etc. Fifty dollars a week is nothing for them, and most of them draw closer to the hundred mark, while a lot of them get over it. Laborers average about thirty a week. Of course, most of this is made by overtime. I heard one fellow say he made more in overtime in one week here than he ever made by straight time in his life before. When I first came they were all working overtime.

I counted nine men driving nails in one fourteen foot board, the first day I was here. Stenographers do not share in these big wages. While I get a fair wage, board for the office help is high. The laborers and outside workers pay \$6.30 a week board. Their board is very good and there are no complaints. The office help eats at what is called the "Engineers' Mess." We have our own cook, flunky and dish washer. Our board is excellent well cooked, and plenty of it. We have sherbet, dessert, etc., and plenty of them. The cost is pro-rated among us, and last week it went to \$7.75 each. This week, I understand it will be \$8.25. The soldiers are well fed and I have not heard any complaints like I heard in Chicago where they do not know anything about it. There is also no sickness like you can hear about in Chicago. Some of them will get the mumps and their barracks will be quarantined, but such cases do not amount to anything. I also heard one of the laborers barracks in the "stockade" was quarantined for itch. The Post Exchange and other stores, pogorn wagons, red hot stands, etc. are under government control and all prices are normal. Even cigars and tobacco that took a jump just before I left Chicago, are at the same old price of 10 cents here. This being a reservation is the only spot in Kansas where they can be bought too. Army City a little mush-room town just east of the Cantonment, began charging mushroom town prices. Gen. Wood cautioned them but they thought they could charge anything they pleased; so he quarantined them on account water, sewerage, etc. that they have not got, and they

are starving now, as they do not get any soldier trade. They are still building theatres, etc. there expecting the quarantine to be raised, but when the negroes began coming they were quartered down at the east end next to Army City, and that town is now up against it worse than ever. The profiteer can not get by here. These negroes have jazz bands and fun of their own anyway. When they first came they were made to take cold showers like white people, but they are so susceptible to pneumonia that they were allowed to omit the shower. I saw a bunch of them get off the train the other Sunday. Some of them were minus some clothes, but they clutched banjoes, guitars, cornets, or some musical instrument. They got together on the station platform and began to sing some negro songs, but when some of the white soldiers standing around started to kid them about the cold shower that was coming they changed their tune and strolled away. Well I have written all this to put in my time, as one of the Chicago bosses is out this morning and I have to appear busy. This is the first time since coming though that I have not had anything to do, and since it will take up your time to read it guess I had better saw off.

With kind regards, I am  
Sincerely yours  
R. A. Carter

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