

THE KANSAS HISTORICAL QUARTERLY

Volume XXXVII

Autumn, 1971

Number 3

Roughing It on Her Kansas Claim: The Diary of Abbie Bright, 1870-1871

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I. INTRODUCTION

AT 21, Pennsylvania-born Abbie Bright had a great desire to see the American West, which to her was that part of the country west of her native state. In 1870 the fruition of such a desire was not easily attained for single girls did not just pack their bags and roam the country unescorted as some were doing 100 years later. Instead it was necessary to visit relatives and friends along the way in order for virtue to be protected by the men of the family.

Abbie Bright was no ordinary Victorian female. She was a woman with a sense of propriety but also with a determined mind and a yen for adventure. She accepted the restrictions which society placed upon those of her sex. She did tour her West and the record of her trip was recorded in the diary published here.

Abbie had been born on December 17, 1848, on a farm near Danville, Pa. Her parents were Peter and Mary (Evans) Bright who had moved onto their 180 acres in 1833. "It was a fine farm home," Abbie wrote many years later in an autobiographical sketch. "No farm in Valey Township had such a variety of fruit, and so many flowers, as we had."

Childhood was pleasant in Pennsylvania but when Abbie was 12 the Civil War broke out and her three brothers, Dennis, Hiram, and Philip, enlisted. Dennis and Philip were severely wounded during the conflict and Hiram contracted a serious disease which resulted in his early discharge. The daughters of the family, Abbie, Rebecca,

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Penina, and Mary, stayed home to help their mother with her hospital aid work.

When Abbie was 15 she enrolled in the Danville Institute, two-and-one-half miles from her home. Afterwards she taught, and then attended Keystone State Normal at Kutztown, now Kutztown State College. When she commenced her studies there in December, 1867, the school was barely a year old and consequently not large. Nevertheless the instruction was good and after one term, which ended in the spring of 1868, Abbie returned home and was hired to teach at what she called the Blue's school. "I got a good certificate, partly because Supt. Henry knew I had gone to Normal School," she later recalled. Her salary was \$16 a month for three months of 22 days each.

In the spring of 1870 Abbie attended Keystone Normal a second time and it must have been during that period that she decided to go West. She arranged with her roommate, Mary Klop, to write letters in the form of diaries and exchange them after Abbie's return East. And when she signed a contract to teach at the Blue's school in the fall it was with the express understanding that should she decide to travel she could leave early. As it turned out she taught only two weeks.

Hiram and his wife, who lived in Indiana, were visiting with Abbie's parents when school commenced and it didn't take them long to convince Abbie that she should go home with them. Since Rebecca was willing to finish Abbie's term at the Blue's school there was nothing to hinder her.

Thus it was that Abbie left home on August 23, 1870. After stopping at Reading and Columbus, the party reached Hiram's home on September 2. It is here that her diary begins.

It should be noted that Abbie's brother Philip had come to Kansas about the time she went to Indiana. Though the use of his right hand was restricted as the result of his wartime wound Philip had taken 160 acres of the Osage Trust Lands which had recently been opened for settlement. When the desire to see more than Indiana and Illinois struck Abbie she chose to visit Philip on his Sedgwick county claim near present Clearwater. And, as her diary discloses, she herself took 160 acres as an investment.

This reproduction of Abbie's diary is from two "original" copies. Whether either is the original "original" is a moot question. And which of the two "originals" is the earlier is equally obscure. The version of the diary which constitutes the main portion of this published edition has the appearance of having been prepared for non-

family use. It is written separately, while the other is part of a larger diary. In addition certain names have been changed or deleted for reasons known only to Abbie herself. Why, for instance, would she continually refer to Hiram's wife Rhoda as Katura, her friend Belle Butler as Bess Bee and the Robert West family in Kansas as the North family? None of the entries concerning these persons reflects on their character so the change may represent nothing more than whimsical treatment on the part of the diarist.

The publication here was taken mainly from the diary prepared for nonfamily use for two reasons. First, when work commenced on its editing, it was the only copy known. The other version appeared after all preliminary copy work had been done and the editing itself was well along. Second, this first available account seems the more detailed. However, in some cases the other version contains additional information which is printed here in italic type to indicate that it is taken from this other source. Thus all diary entries in roman type represent the first "nonfamily" version while all italic-type entries represent the second.

Some corrections in Abbie's spelling and punctuation have been made by the editor. Abbie at times seemed prone to use dashes for periods and commas. Though a few of these have been retained for flavor, others have been changed for reasons of clarity. Spelling has usually been left as Abbie wrote, though in a few cases where it was obvious she knew the correct spelling changes were made. In all cases no changes were made that would destroy the character of Abbie's style.

The Kansas State Historical Society is indebted to Mr. and Mrs. Donald G. Fairchild of Gladbrook, Iowa, for the Abbie Bright diaries and related family papers and pictures. All the information concerning Abbie's early life comes from the second diary and from family letters. Mr. Fairchild, who is a grandson of the diarist, and Mrs. Fairchild have been of inestimable help in sorting out family names, dates, and associations.

II. THE DIARY, SEPTEMBER, 1870-JUNE, 1871

SEPT. 2ND 1870.—After planning for six months, that which I hoped for has come to pass, and I am at Red Oak Shelter Indiana.¹

So much to see, and talk about. I have not had a chance to write of our stop at Reading Pa—or our visit at Westerville, O.

1. Abbie was visiting the home of her brother Hiram, whose family consisted of his wife Rhoda and their children, Mary Ellen, Frank B., Butler C., and Oakley who was then two years old.

When we reached Williams port [, Ind.], a friend of brothers was in town, and he brought us out to his home. I was hungry enough to have been satisfied with a piece of bread—but peach pies were baked, and chicken fried—and as Katura [Rhoda] said “We faired sumtously.”

After dinner the horses were hitched to the big wagon again, and off we started for Red Oak Shelter eight miles farther. We sat on a spring seat, which was untop of the waggon-box. My feet did not touch the floor, and when the horses went faster than a walk, I had to hold fast to the seat, to keep from bouncing off. It would have been less tiresome to have sat on my trunk, and rested my feet on the floor.

So much for my first ride in a “Husher [Hoosier?] buggy.”

SEPT. 7—The weather is delightful—the children interesting, and the days too short. Last Sunday we went twelve miles to Crows Grove to church. There was to have been a wedding—but on the way to church, the bride got timid, so they stopped at the Squires and were married, then went on to church. It was known over the country, that the wedding was to be Sunday, so there was a big crowd there, and the disappointment at not seeing the marriage was great. However we saw the bride, and she looked very happy and sweet. She wore a silver gray silk, with a velvet hat to match.

Coming home Katura [Rhoda] told us when they came west fifteen years ago, the woman nearly all wore sunbonnets. Her wedding bonnet was very pretty, and much admired. A neighbor girl was going to be married, and wanted her bonnet.

After some dickering, they made a trade—the girl got the bonnet, and Katura [Rhoda] got a pig.

“That pig” said she—“was the sourse of the hundreds of pigs we have raised since—”

As we drove along some prairie chickens flew up from the road side. They were the first I had seen. When I asked about them, Katura [Rhoda] said, “there are only a few now, years back there were plenty, and they were not so wild. When there was snow, they would find shelter and food in corn shocks. They make a peculiar noise in the Spring when mating. In the morning one heard their do-do-do o o o in every direction—Now we seldom hear them. When Harry Hoch was little he told me they talked dutch.”

“What!” I said, “Yes they do” he insisted, “One says ich kin do do do o o o, and another says was koust do-do-do-o-o-o! Not a bad imitation.”

We rode in a spring waggon, which was called in that locality, a buggy, and were just beeing bought by the more prosperous farmers. The farm houses were far apart, no trees—except what were planted around the buildings. The farms were generally large. One field we passed, was a quarter section, 160 acres, and only used for pasture. It was an interesting drive, but would take too long to write about all I saw and heard.

Brother's home is at the edge of timber. There is timber west and north of the house, great oaks, maples, hickory ct. The house faces the East. The barn, sheds and corn cribs are west of the house. There are nine horses and a number of coalts, nearly 200 head of cattle over 200 hogs, and 300 sheep, not counting the lambs.

SEPT-16 Two weeks since we came. How fast time passes. Brother has some of his cattle out on the open prairie. One day he was going out to see them, and asked me to ride along. We went through the timber—crossed Pine creek, and some four or six miles farther came to prairie. From there direct west for twenty miles, was open prairie and not a building of any kind—and only one lone tree. How that had escaped the fires that in times past had burned over the prairie—was a mystery.

From the last house we rode until we came to [illegible] hearder, some five miles out—not far from a little shack, where he lived and kept his pony. There were several hundred head in the heard, which were grazing near a big pool or pond. It was a wonderful sight, no fences, no houses, nothing but grass and a few flowers.

Back of us in the distance, could be see[n] the tops of the last grove we had passed.

The cattle were under the care of Mr. Goodwin all Summer. The owners going out every few days with supplies for him, and to see how the cattle were doing. I asked how far we were from the Ill. line, and was told we had crossed it a mile or two back. I got out of the waggon to pick some late blooming flowers—and walked a short distance.

The cattle not beeing used to petticoats, soon had their heads and tails up—and were either going to run at me, or be frightened and stampeded.

Mr. Goodrich [or Goodwin?] called my attention to them, and said I should hurry back, and get into the waggon. I did not need a second telling—for one look at their lowering heads and hornes was enough. Going back we stopped in the timber near Pine creek—and picked up a half bushel of wild plums.

[SEPT.] 22ST—We attended the fair at Pine Village the other day, and I met many nice people. The exhibits were not extensive. People went mostly to meet acquaintances, and visit with their neighbors. We took dinner at a dining hall. The desert was vinegar pie. I thought it strange when fruit is so plenty and pumpkins too. I think it was made of sugar, spice, and everything that is good and nice.

As I want to teach—and the schools begin in Oct. I thought it time to see the directors. I started out on Coly—and was riding leisurely along enjoying the sunshine—the ride ct., when I heard the report of a gun. Up went Coly's head, and she danced round and round in a circle three or four times, then stoped and listened. When I spoke to her she moved on.

It was all so sudden I wonder how I ever kept my seat. I told them about it at the supper table—and was told Coly had been an army horse, and always acted that way when she heard the report of a gun.

After the close of the Civil War there were sales of army horses in Ken. and brother had gone down and bought several. Here come the children, I promised to walk with them, down to the creek.

[SEPT.] 23d—I learned there were three schools in the district lacking teachers. I choose one eight miles from home. Where I could board at Mrs. Bees,² and have less than a mile to walk to school, Provided I get a certificate. Tomorrow brother is going to Williamsport on business, and as the Co. Supertendent holds examinations there, I will go along.

[SEPT.] 24th—Well the examination is over, and I got along nicely. Part was oral and part written—I need not have worried about it. The certificates are given for six months to two years. Mine is for two years, much to my surprise. All the applicants did not fair as well, and I wonder if they did so much poorer than I, or if I did so much better than they. Only one in this district, had higher markings than I, and he has been teaching 18 years.

In grammar, the question, "What part of speach are two—too and to." then we were to use the three words in describing something. Very few could answer, hence their low grade in grammar. As for me—I must be studying U. S. History to improve my standing. My grades are—Orthography 95, Reading 100, Writing 100, Arithmetic 90, Grammar 90, Geography 85, U. S. History 75.

2. Mrs. Butler, Hiram's mother-in-law. Mr. Butler had died two years before so the family at home consisted of Mrs. Butler, Bell (Belle?), who Abbie consistently called Bess in her second diary, and George, Coleman, and Will.

School begins the middle of Oct. A four months term, \$40 a month, and \$2 a week for board.

OCT. 14—These are busy days. I am a slow worker, but try to help. We made apple butter of three barrels of cider.

Apples are plenty, and good. When little O[akley] finds an extra nice one, he brings it to me. Yesterday he came with a fine bell-flower, "Here is a pig belt for you," he said. He is the youngest, and we all pet him.

Brother has so much hired help—it keeps Katura [Rhoda] busy cooking: besides the fruit and garden to look after. The older children are good help.

We got the mail to day. Letters from home, all well.

M[ary?] is so good to write, and keep me posted.

OCT. 21—I came down Sunday. School began Monday.

The school house stands at a crossroads on the prairie.

No fence around it. Back of it grows slough grass and big weeds, no trees on the lot, and no building of any kind besides the school house. A load of coal dumped by the door. "Simply this and nothing more."

The first fire I kindled with weeds and dried grass. The next morning I picked up pine cones in Mrs. Bee's [Butler's] yard. Going home last eve—I saw there was bark on some of the fence posts I passed, so this morning I pulled off enough, to kindle fire this morning, and next Monday. I must see about getting some one to have some kindling.

This is my first experience with soft coal, it kindles easily, but how it does smudg.

Have eleven scholars, will have more when the corn is out of the way.

The scholars work well, so I have no trouble to keep order, and how they do like to sing. Motion songs delight them. I can teach them tunes. I wish I was a good singer.

Nov. 4—This is the third week of school. I have been up to Red Oak Shelter once—and they sent my mail down once. Sometimes I write a letter and it is four or five days before it gets mailed. I do get so anxious for my mail. Would like to go up this evening, but it is too stormy. School moves along smoothly.

One of my best boys was a New York waif. He was sent west with a lot of other children, who were adopted by people in this, and adjoining Counties.

George is tall for his age—13. He has a very good face and good

manners. I wonder about his parentage. I have been told that he now has a very good home.

The days are coalder. I have learned how to keep the fire over night. Close the door, open the draft, and the room is soon warm in the mornings before the children come. There was a mouse running around the room to day, much to the amusement of the children.

Nov. 24—Some time since I wrote here, but I have written many letters in the mean time. I do most of my writing at noons, or after school. Rode home last Fri. after school. I am becoming quite a rider. Two good letters from home.

Dec. 5—I had a glorius ride home Fri. evening. Did not get started until 4-30—and these short days, the sun sets early—but it did not get dark as the moon shone in all her splendor. It was a grand evening for a gallop over the prairie, to the timber.

Mrs. Bee [Butler] lets me ride her pony when I go home.

Going home I ride fast, coming back I let Kit poke along.

Sunday one of their neighbors was buried. I went with them to the house, but not to church, as it would have made me too late starting for here. When we got there, several men were making the rough box, which when finished—was sent to the grave yard.

After a while the coffin was carried out, put into a big waggon, a sheet spread over it, and they started for the church. Not a word was said—no preacher there. Some two years ago Mrs. B's [Butler's] husband was burried—and his funeral sermon had not yet been preached. So at this time—the sermon for both was to be preached. They tell me it frequently happens that the sermon is preached weeks after the burial. I suppose it is owing to the scarcity of ministers.

I reached Mrs. Bee's [Butler's] in time to go with them to church at Fee's Hall. We went in the big waggon. There were an endless number of children there. One little chap, after screaming lustily—ran away from his mother—up the aisle—unto the platform, and crawled under the preachers bench. It was comical. I ought to remember the text, but I dont, there was too much noise and confusion.

Dec. 19—Did not get home Fri. So no mail for over a week.

The boys went to town, and I sent letters along to be mailed. No one seems anxious for the mail but I.

Last Saturday was my twenty second birthday.

Age is creeping on, but I fear it does not bring the expected wisdom with it. Last Sat. I spent the day sewing, and answering

letters. The other week when I was up home, I made of a black and green wool goods, a suit for little O[akley], and he is to wear it when he has his picture taken.

This is a snowy Monday. There are but six scholars.

DEC. 20—Yesterday p. m. Mr. W[oods] came for his children, and I had a sled ride home. C[oleman Butler] brought us all up this morning. The sleighing is good. It is so cold it will last some time.

We are all invited to a party to night. Bess [Belle Butler] and I would rather stay home, but to please the boys I expect we will go.

DEC. 21—We went to the party last night. J[ames Hunter] came around this way for us. There were seven in the sled, and we had a merry time. More boys there, as usualy at their merry makings, than girls—and I danced until my ankels hurt. I do not like to refuse any one.

Some lack polish, but they are mostly well-meaning, up right boys. There are to be several other parties soon, but I shant go, I feel too stupid next day. It is very cold—only six scholars to day.

DEC. 23—I shall leave school out early, and go home. I'll have a cold ride, but am so anxious for mail. There was a party last night, but I would not go. This morning I ate breakfast standing by the cookstove, and started to school when some were still in bed. I like to have the room good and warm when the children come. Have a good stove and plenty of coal. The kitchen is a leanto—and cold—This morning I washed at one end, and by the time I wiped my face, and walked to the other end to comb, my hair was frozen. I am glad my hair is shingled, it dont take much combing, and another cold morning I will not wet it.

DEC. 28—Christmas is past. I spent it at my brothers, with the children—and a plenty of apples, nuts, pop corn, homemade candy and cider. I had a pleasant time.

It was so cold Mrs. Bee [Butler] did not want me to come up Fri., but I was determined to go.

She gave me a pair of drawers to wear, that were made out of a blanket, and they kept me warm, except my feet, which were frost bitten a little. If women rode crosswise like men, how much warmer and better it would be.

Kit seemed to like the outing, and travelled well.

There was no school Monday. I came down by way of Fees Hall in the p. m. When I turned the corner there, a team came up behind me to pass, but Kit would not let them. She started to run, and run

she did for three miles, with the team close behind us. A little way from Mrs. Bees [Butler's] they turned off, and Kit slacked up.

That was the fastest riding I ever did.

They say Kit never lets a team pass her.

JAN. 2—1871—Did not go home last Fri. as I had school Sat. to make up for Monday. Went to church at Grows Grove yesterday.

When we came back Mr. De T[erk] was here. He gave me a pair of kid lined gloves, with fur at the wrists, very nice. They are a philopenia [philopena]³ forfeit. There is a sort of crase, playing philopenia, just around here.

The sleighing is gone. One evening last week we spent at M[offit's]. Their little girls come to school.

JAN. 4—Mrs. Bee [Butler] had her butchering done yesterday. All her children were here to help. Mr. H[unter] called to ask me to go with him to a party tomorrow night. It is much warmer, and all the children are at school again.

Some times I wish I could have these children under my care for a year. How some of them would advance.

They have to "unlearn" some things taught them in former terms of school—which is hard to do. More than ever have I wished that I was a good singer. Some days ago, Sallie, my largest girl, came to me with a song book, and asked, "Could you teach me this tune?" She had heard it somewhere but could not remember the tune. The tune was Dennis, the words—

"A charge to keep I have

A God to glorify

An never dying soul to save

And fit for the sky."

I wrote the words on the black board. We sing it, and I believe all the children have learned it. We are also singing several other hymns of Sallies choosing, but they like the ones I first taught them. Shall we gather at the River, Music in the Air, and the motion songs best.

JAN. 6—Last night I was home by five o'clock, and dressed when Mr. H[unter] came. The invitations said be there at six. Mr. H[unter] said he thought it would be a very nice party. I was tired and did not want to go. I wanted to rest, read, and go to bed early.

I find one cannot always please ones self.

3. A game for two in which one player tried to draw the other into paying a forfeit, such as a present of some kind. Usually the game was played by sharing the twin kernels of a nut and the forfeit was paid when a certain condition was fulfilled, such as being the first to say "yes" or "no" or the last to say "philopena" on certain occasions.

Well we were at O[sborn's]—about fifteen minutes, when Squire [Strump] entered the room, followed by a lady and gentleman.

When in the center of the room, he turned around and married them. We were surprised, but just so it was. After congratulations, we went to supper, and an excellent supper it was, finishing with nuts confectionary ct. After wards we danced, I have never enjoyed a dance more. The bride is a relative of the O[sborn's]. The groom and his brother and a friend who came with him, are from Laffayette. The brother reminded me of Prof. S[chaffer]. I was his partner in three cotillions. I danced with the groom too. They are excellent dancers, too bad I never expect to see them again. Of course I danced with Mr. H[unter] and the others also, which was more than a little for a girl who started the evening tired. Bess [Belle Butler] danced as much as I did. One of the strangers, always addressed her as Miss Lillie, as she is a brunette, we think he must have meant a tiger lily. On the whole it was a merry party and I am glad I went, and told Mr. H[unter] so.

JAN. 20—Noon. I am going home this evening. I want the mail.

Had a new experience to day, and must jot it down while it is fresh in my mind. We often see a mouse run around the room. Last Monday there were two frozen on the stove hearth. This a. m. I was sitting by Ruth helping her with the arithmetic lesson, when I felt something move between my dress and skirt. I was wise enough not to make a fuss, for I guessed what it was.

I got up quietly—went out the door, shook my skirts vigorously—and down dropt a mouse.

Another thing to be thankful for—that I am not afraid of mice.

JAN. 23—Friday I rode Bess' [Belle's] pony, as Mrs. Bees [Butler's] had a sore foot.

The roads were rough, it had thawed then froze. I could scarcely go faster than a walk. It got dark when I was more than two miles from home. When we got to a little stream, I could not get the pony acrost, because there was a little ice on each side, I coaxed, I whiped, I tried to lead her acrost—but no use. I could not get her over. I then had to go back to Steets, [Steel's?] and ask for help. One of the men went with me. He tried and tried to get her over. Finily she got excited, and he backed her over. Then I crossed on the fence, mounted and rode to A[llen's]—where I asked if I could ford Pine Creek.

They told me brother had been there looking for me, but it got so late, he decided I was not coming, and went home. The thaw had raised the creek, and I would surely have drowned, had I tried the old ford. They urged me to stay all night. I thanked them,

and said if I could cross in safety—I would like to go on. Then one of their hands got a horse and went along.

We went up the creek, where it was wider, with a slower current. I managed to keep my seat by hoalading on to the ponies main when going up the steep bank on the other side. He offered to ride home with me, but I thanked him, and said I had already put him to so much trouble. So I road on alone, acrost an open meadow to the timber. There are no fences there.

Then I took what in the darkness seemed to be the right road, but it grew narrower—and the limbs brushed me, and when I came to an open place, I knew I had never been there before, so was on the wrong road.

I turned back to the creek, went down it to the old ford—and by the light of dim stars found the road and followed it to the timber. When I finely came to the gate that led into my brothers fenced timber, and on home, I was greatly relieved. The owls had been hooting, which is enough to scare timid people, and my feet were cold. They were surprised to see me, I found letters waiting me, and I was paid for my trip up.

Saturday night Katura [Rhoda], Nelson [a hired hand] and I went to hear a revivalist, who was preaching in a schoolhouse north of us. It was so dark we got out of the road. Nelson road against a stump, Katura's [Rhoda's] saddle turned, but we got there a little late. Nelson tightened the girths before we started back. I rode Coly, wish I could take her East with me. Started back to school Sunday p. m. My foot got cold, and I took it out of the stirup.

When about a mile from Mrs. Bee's [Butler's], a rabbit jumped up, and frightened my horse. She gave a jump and landed me in the road. It was good I had my foot out of the stirup, or I might not now be writing about it.

Had I been riding Kit, I don't think I would have had so many misshaps.

JAN. 25—Yesterday at recess—the children came running in yelling that the roof was on fire. I could not get up or do anything to put it out. Then I asked George to climb up the lightening rod. By holding to the places where it was fastened to the house. I helped him up to the first place—and then he could reach the rest. When up he pounded the fire out with his hat.

George is the N. Y. boy, he was here early this morning and we had quite a visit before school time. The children have been bringing cat tales to school, and he told me by soaking them in coal oil, they make good torches. He also said he had gathered and stripped them for pillows.

When I told about the fire at the supper table, I learned there was much bad feeling about the location of the school house, some wanted it moved, others did not, and some wished it would burn down. Well, I thought—not while I am teacher if I can help it.

JAN. 27—My school is larger than it was, have 19 pupils, and that just fills the room. A school south of here closed, and several from there, now come here.

Alas my "good order" is not so good. I am glad that in two weeks, my four months are up.

The other day I met a so called phrenologist. He was a great talker. Bess [Belle] had told me about him, and that should I meet him, I was not to take him seriously, as he was daffy on the subject.

He soon introduced the subject, and after a time I asked how he accounted for it. When the bumps on one side of the head were larger, than on the other. He answered "if larger in the right side, all interests centered in self. If larger on the left side, it denoted great generosity."

He went on to tell me, that my mental faculties were no better developed than those of the majority of people.

I was well balanced, a lover of order, have a good memory, do not like to see people ridiculed, thought a comfortable living indispensable to happiness *et. ct.*

I wonder what more he would have said, had not others come, and the subject were changed.

Last night we went to a Spiritualist meeting at Fees Hall.

To me it appeared to be all slight of hand, but many around here believe in it.

FEB. 2—A cold windy day. I have my hands full now.

We had a good school, and every thing went well.

Had good order, and the children were learning fast— until that school closed south of us, and the five pupils from there, came here. Variety they say is the spice of life— not in this case.

FEB. 17—I put my journal away, thinking I would have more time when school closed, which it did last Friday. The school house caught fire again. One of my good boys put it out, but another, a regular lommix, from the school south, got on the roof and with a stick knocked a hole in the chimney.

I was very much attached to my own scholars, and sorry to leave them, but the others O. dear.

It is a comfort to me that the building did not burn down, while I was teacher. Some times when there was a high wind I would go out to see that the roof was not on fire.

A week ago school closed, then Saturday a. m. Bess [Belle] and I mounted the ponies and came up here. The roads were rough, frozen hard. The ponies were not shod, so we road very slowly, and finily got off and walked over two miles, and led them. When we got to the creek there was three or four feet of thin ice along both sides, and an open current between. The water from the late rain and thaw had run off, so the water was not deep.

Bess' [Belle's] horse, the one I had trouble with some time before, would not cross that strip of ice, and got frightened. Then Kit got spunky, and I could not get her to cross. We got off, and broke the ice with a stick. No good. acrost they would not go. Then we decided to go back to Mr. A[lexander's] leave the ponies in the barn—and wade the creek. Mrs. A[lexander] went along as she said, to see the "performance." We took off shoes and stockings, rolled up our drawers, took our skirts over our armes, carried shoes and stockings and started. Bess [Belle] first. I thought Mrs. A[lexander] would hurt her self laughing. It was a cold crossing, first through ice—then water, then ice again which we had to brake with our feet. We dried our feet and legs—on our skirts as best we could, put on stockings—which fortunately were heavy woolen ones—and shoes—and then on we went through the timber to brothers, while Mrs. A[lexander] still laughing, went home to tell the men when they came for dinner, of the comical sight she had seen down at Pine Creek.

Fortunately neather of us caught cold. The mile or more walk through the timber warmed us up. In the p. m. some of the men went for the ponies. They followed right along through the creek, but would not go first.

Bess [Belle] went home Monday. The creek wading was too good to let pass. So near Valentine day too. So I sketched a picture of Besse [Belle] in the creek—shoes in hand, riding skirt and clothes all gathered up. Mrs. A[lexander] on the bank laughing, while from behind a tree, peeping at her was a handsome man. Katura [Rhoda] said it was good, so I sent it to her for a Valentine and addressed it this way—

Now listen while I tell
This letter is for Mrs. Bee's Bess,
Near Williamsport doth dwell,
In Warren Co. Who from? Now guess.

FER. 21—Poor Journal how I am neglecting you, but it cant be helped. I had an arent down at Mrs. Bee's [Butler's], so I left at 3 p. m. yesterday. The roads muddy, slow riding, it seemed 12

miles instead of eight. They were surprised to see me. Bess [Belle] has the valentine, and was having much fun over it. Started back at 8 a. m. Had a pack of my clothes to bring home, and Mrs. Bee [Butler] sent some things along for her daughter, who is one of our neighbors. She put them all in a pillow slip, and I carried that big bundle on my lap all the way up, in constant fear of dropping it in the mud. However I reached home safely. Saw a big flock of prairie chickens on the way up. Found two of the children in bed with bad colds.

FEB. 25—I expect this will smell of calomel, oil, ct. The children have been quite sick with lung fever, are a little better but very restless. They both had fly blisters on their chests; now we put on bread and milk poultices, which must be changed often. It is after midnight. Katura [Rhoda] has laid down, brother and I will be up the rest of the night.

I sewed until I got sleepy—now I am trying to write.

It is almost a week since we had the mail.

Brother Philip came west, about time I did, but went farther. Had a letter from him last week. He is in Kansas. I wrote to him the other day. Told him my school was out, and after visiting the cousins I supposed I'd go home, but would like to see more of the west; did he think I could get a school out there.

He is in some out of the way place, and I suppose it will be two weeks before I hear from him.

MARCH 3.—The children were much improved, and brother thought it safe to leave them, and bring me over here to see the Ill. cousins. We came over that twenty miles of open prairie I saw last Sept. when we went out to look at the cattle. Now the ponds are full of water, and look like lakes. The Jordan was as dry as a stick when we crossed it last Summer. Now it is quite a stream, with ponds here and there like beads on a string. One place we crossed a little stream, and the horses nearly mired. Indeed one laid down and there was danger of drowning. Brother talked to them and encouraged them. After floundering around they found firmer foot hold, and pulled the spring waggon buggy out, I feared the buggy would pull to pieces, and dump us in the water, but "all is well that ends well."

Brother called my attention to the bullrushes growing there, and said he should not have crossed there, as it was likely to be boggy where they grew.

We found cousin Emma's family well, and next morning brother started back.

MARCH 10—I am having a very happy visit here. Made a dress for the baby, and did some other sewing. Went to school one p. m. with the girls. Was pleased with the school, good order, and good teachers.

The cousins have many books. I have enjoyed reading some of Shakespere plays and from Goody's [Godey's] Ladies Book out loud to cousin Emma.

She has good help, so does not need to worry about house work.

MARCH 10—I had expected to have gone down to Egypt to see cousin Sallie [Barnes], and had engaged passage in the buss from here to Danville, twenty miles to the railroad.

It rained and the Vermillion was so high the buss could not cross. The buss only makes two trips a week, and every seat was engaged for next trip. I waited a week, and in the mean time it rained some more and the water was high again. I think some of giving up the trip. It is 150 miles direct South, but I must go around about way, which will make the trip much longer.

MARCH 23—Olive P. O. Ill. Here I am at last. The bus left for Danville at 6 a. m. Monday just two weeks from the time I had expected to leave. We had only gone a few miles when it began to rain and blow. I could hardly hold the umberela. I had to use it, as the bus had no top.

The Vermillion was still high, the water going over the hubs when we crossed. There were only three passengers, I was surprised to hear one of them discuss Greek mythology with the driver. Spent the night in D[anville]—and next morning went as far as Toulon, where I changed cars to the Ill. Central and waited three hours for the south bound train. From Toulon to Oden is a grand prairie, the most extensive I have seen. When night came we could see away to the East a prairie fire. Reached Oden at eight, and spent the night there. Next morning took an east train, and reached Bridgeport after twelve p. m.

The cousins had been in twice to meet me, not knowing about the high water—they had decided I was not coming.

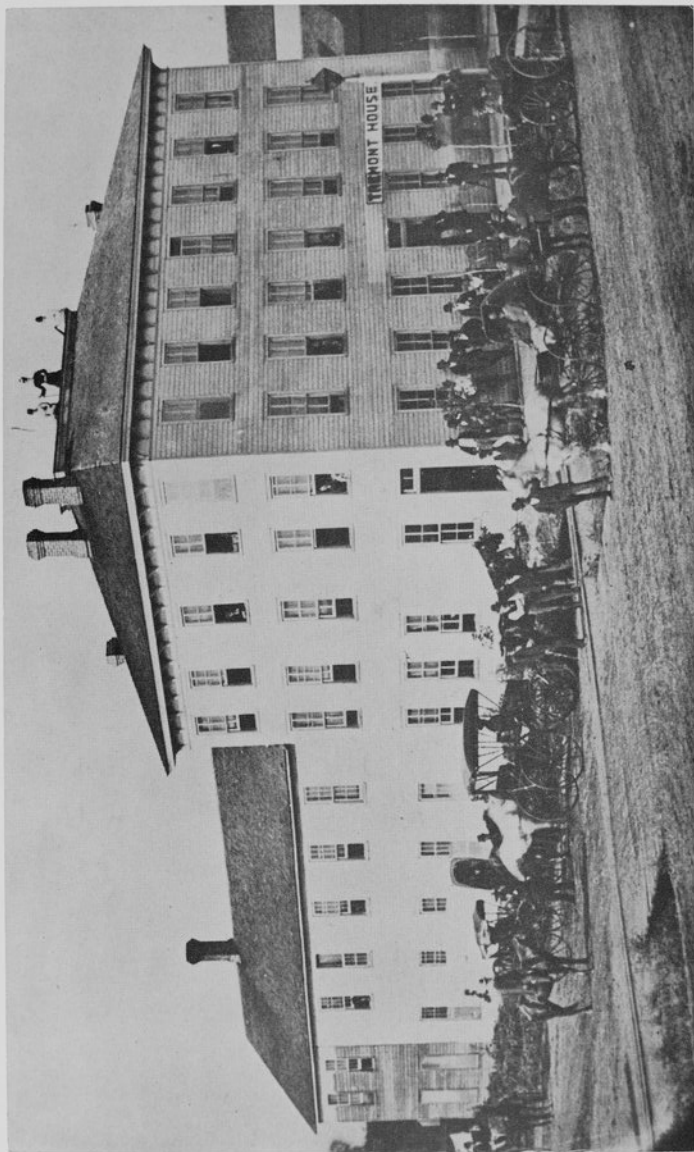
A friend of theirs—who knew of my comming, secured passage for me with a man who was going on past their home. He was an elderly man, and very talkative, so by asking a few questions, I learned much of the country and the people who live there.

The cousins thought I had given up coming, and were surprised to see me. They have two children, and we have already become good friends.

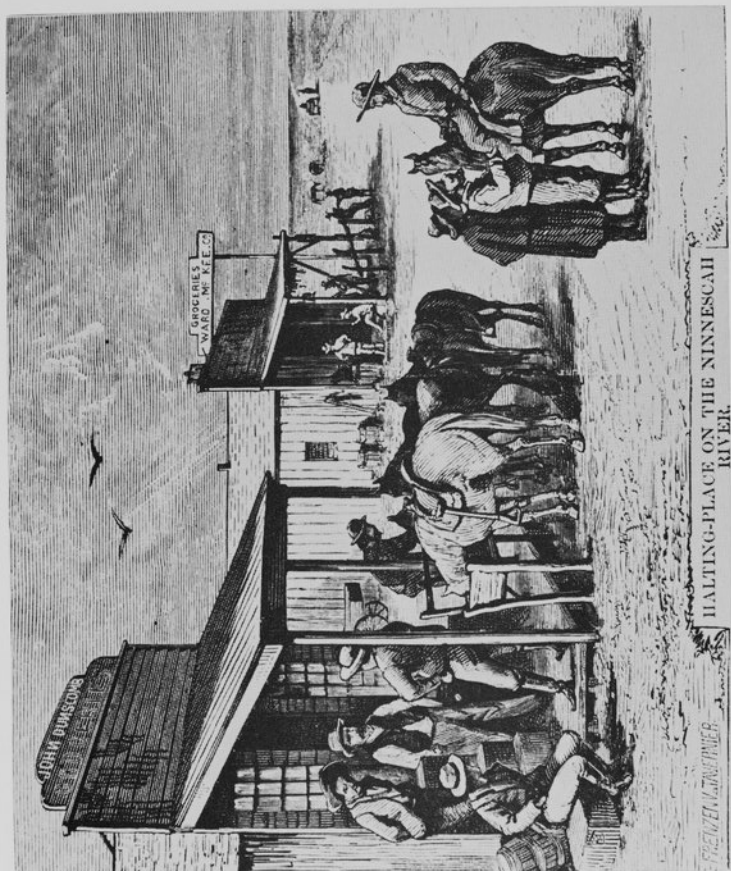
APRIL 4—The other day we went to church at Olive Branch. It is a log church, the first I have ever been in. The women sit on



Abbie Bright (1848-1926), the diarist, traveled alone from Indiana to Wichita in 1871 and down the Texas (Chisholm) trail to Clearwater. When she met her brother and complained that "there were all men" over on the trail he advised, "Behave like a lady, and you will be treated like one."



The painted portion of the two-story section of this Wichita hotel was the Harris House in the spring of 1871 when Abbie first visited Wichita. This 1878 photograph shows the enlarged hotel.



HALTING-PLACE ON THE NINNESCAH RIVER.

John Dunscomb's grocery store, in this sketch by Paul Frenzeny and Jules Tavernier, was McLean and Russell's Ninnescah ranch building when Abbie Bright arrived at Old Clearwater in the spring of 1871. (Compare with the cover painting.) Old Clearwater, of which nothing remains today, was at the trail crossing of the Ninnescah river about one-half mile southeast of present Clearwater.



Abbie's brother Philip (1846-1873), a veteran of the Civil War shown here with his Grand Army medals, had preceded her to Clearwater by a few months. He helped with her claim, suffered severely from the ague, and later moved to Arizona, where he met a tragic death in 1873.

one side of the church the men on the other. Nearly all the women wore sunbonnets. I dont see how they can hear with them on. The P. O. is a mile from here.

I walked over for the mail, and was rewarded with three letters. One from sister Mary. How good she is to write to me so regularly.

APRIL 7—Fine day. The peaches have bloomed, now the pears and cherries ct. are in bloom. The soil does not seem as fertile here as farther north. This end of Ill. is called Egypt. They have such odd names for places around here. Hard to find—Deadhog—Greasy—Foggy—Possim-point—ct. Cousin Sallie put water in the ash hopper, and a few days later, when she had lye enough, she made pretzels or is it Bretzels? They were excellent. I always supposed they had to be made in a factory. One Sunday we were to a Presbyterian church—some miles away. Part of the road led through low land and as the buggy—(The cousins have a top buggy which is great luxury out west) jolted over a strip of corduroy road, I noticed rose canes among the tangled underbrush by the road side, and asked what color the flowers were. Cousin Jim said he had never noticed, and when I asked the name of a shrub with a yellow fringe of bloom, he said, "I cant tell you, really I only know the name of one flower." "What is that," I asked. Then he could not remember it. How we did laugh. but we laughed more yet, when some time later he said, "I remember now, it is the Johny jump up."

APRIL 9—We went to the log church this p. m. The people seem devout. There was a good lesson in the sermon.

A woman, and a child two or three years old, sat in front of me. The boy wore leather boots. They stood up when they sang, and the boy stood on the bench, and refreshed himself from the maternal fount. Why not?

The days go by so fast. We visit, and sew. I made a dress for cousin Sallie, and wrote many letters.

APRIL 12—Tomorrow I leave Luken Prairie where I have had such a pleasant visit. The cousins urge me to stay longer, but I think I will hear from brother Philip, and for that reason am anxious to get back to Red Oak Shelter. The weather is delightful.

APRIL 18—Cousin Jim took me to Bridgeport, reached Vin[c]ennes at 1 p. m. Missed connections and had to wait until 7 p. m. When I studied about this old French town, I little thought I would ever be stranded there six hours. When 7 p. m. came, I had walked around the town, sat on the bank of the Wabash, read all

the love stories in Harpers Magazine, and embroidered a little. Spent the night in Terre Haut, and had another long wait at Green Castle, from 8-30 to 1 p. m. "What cant be cured must be endured." I tried to wait patiently. There was timber near the depot, and the red wood or red bud was in bloom. I sat there and read and embroidered, so the time did not seem so long.

At LaFayette waited another two hours—and finily reached W[illiamsport]. Glad to get back to Red Oak Shelter where I found several letters waiting for me.

Brother Philip wrote his address is Wichita Kans.

He had spent the winter in Kans. and Indian Territory.

He says he knows nothing about schools, but if I want to come west, I can take up Government Land, and after living on it six months, can prove up on it by paying \$1¼ an acre for it. He took up a claim some time ago, and if I go—I can stay with him, his house is almost finished. I am only to take heavy strong clothing, and what ever I will want for a bed. The rout is via Quincy—Kansas City, Topeka, Emporia—There a stage runs to Wichita, where he will meet me, or 20 miles to Ninnesaw River, on the old Texas trail.⁴ If I decide to go, I shall do so at once. Brother [Hiram] says he would go with me, but his men are plowing with five teams, and another planting corn, so he cant leave now. I wonder what mother will say, when she hears I am going to Kans.

APRIL 24—I wrote to Philip at once, that I would leave here the 25th. That will give the letter a weeks start of me. These have been busy days. Now my trunk is packed, It would not hold all—so a pillow with an army blanket was roaped on top. I will carry my big brown basket, with lunch and toilet belongings ct. and two shawles, beside my wrap. All ready to leave early in the morning.

MAY 1ST 1871—Ninnescah River Kans.

The 25th brother and Katura [Rhoda] took me to W[illiamsport] and left for Kans. Crossed the Mississippi at night, reached Kansas City next morning, where I had to change cars, and have my trunk rechecked.

The pillow and blanket that was roaped on top of the trunk, were loose, and no one had time to roap it again, so I had to take them in the car with me. I wrapped them in the single shawl as

4. Philip's letter was dated Wichita, March 12. In addition to the information Abbie repeated in her diary Philip commented that "the land is about as good as any out of doors at the present, and immigration is comencing this spring very heavy. If you wish to come I will try and hold an extra good claim for you. There is a very good one joining the one which I took last fall, if I can't hold it for you there are still others joining perhaps not so good though. I have no doubt you might make more this way than teaching, and I am shure it would be better for you on account of health. Ther is not one near her[e] that is complaining except of a great appetite. . . ."—Philip's letter is in the manuscript division, Kansas State Historical Society.

tight as I could, and it looked just like a baby bundle. After we left Topeka I inquired of the conductor about stage connections at Emporia—He said the R. R. was now finished to Cottonwood.⁵ I should get out there, and get a ticket to Cottonwood. He would take my check and recheck my trunk. "Dont hurry I will wait for you." he added. There at Emporia I saw the first Indian.

Soon after leaving E. the stage agent came to book those who left by stage next morning.

I asked if it was necessary to do so before reaching Cottonwood, and was told that to be sure of a seat it was. So I paid \$10. for a passage to Wichita, 80 miles from E. I asked some questions about the country, and we had a very interesting conversation, and a laugh about my pillow and blanket bundle.

He said the winds were so strong, that by the end of a month, I would be tanned the color of a buff envelop.

The hotel at C[ottonwood Falls] is nearly a mile from the depot, and the hardest looking place I ever stopped at, with so many idle men lounging around.⁶ I went at once to my room, and found I was to share it with a young girl—who had come down on an earlier train.⁷

We soon became acquainted, She reminded me so much of A. D. R. [Adam Daniel Row]. Gifted A. D. R. why did Providence allow him to die, after so short a time missionary in India. What memories a face will recall.

The stage was to leave at 5-30. We left the lamp burn all night, as a help not to over sleep. We were up in time for breakfast, which was the first meal I had bought since leaving Indiana. My lunch held out well. There were two stages—four horses to each. Both were packed tight. The exceedingly young—and exceedingly silly bride, who came down on the train I did, and my roommate and I, sat in the back seat. What with my basket and bundle I was somewhat crowded. Some one shouted "All ready" and away we went. They changed horses every ten or twelve miles, and at times drove like fury. Sometimes your head would bang against the top; then those riding out side, would call, "How's that for high." A very common expression out here. When we came to rough places—the

5. The Santa Fe was completed to Cottonwood station in March, 1871. Next year the name was changed to Strong City when that village was founded February 29, 1872.—A. T. Andreas and W. G. Cutler, *History of the State of Kansas* (Chicago, 1883), p. 1360.

6. Since Cottonwood was nothing more than a station in April, 1871, Abbie crossed the Cottonwood river to Cottonwood Falls, the county seat, where she spent the night.

7. In the other version of her diary Abbie states that she arrived in Kansas City at eight in the morning and there changed trains. This would have allowed her to board the Kansas Pacific mail train which left Kansas City at 8:15 A. M. and was scheduled to arrive in Topeka at 1:20 P. M. Abbie wrote that she arrived in Topeka at one P. M. and again changed trains. She probably boarded the Santa Fe's mail train which left North Topeka, where the Kansas Pacific's depot was located, at 1:35 P. M. and which arrived at Cottonwood station at 6:20 P. M. Time schedules are from the *Wichita Tribune*, March 22, 1871.

driver usually called out "Make yourselves firm." Knowing what to expect, we grabbed hold of the side of stage or the seat, and avoided getting badly thumped.

The bridal party left at the second or third change of horses. Some one said he was running a store near there.

We got out once, and walked, until the coach came up.

It was not far, for they changed horses in a marvalous short time. There were very few improvements to be seen. One place we saw a buffalo calf, tied with a roap to a stake.

At Eldorado some of the passengers left to go over another stage rout. The girl got out too. She had told me that she was going to work in a hotel there.

I was sorry to part with her. From E[l Dorado] to Augusta there was but one stage, with six horses and fifteen or eighteen passengers. I was the only woman, and kept quiet, and tried to be dignified, weather it was a success or not I do not know; but I do know that I was always treated with courtsey.

When we crossed White river⁸ the water ran throu the coach. I raised my feet in time, but my skirts got wet. The late rains had raised the water in the river, which is not wide—but deep.

The passengers kept up a brisk conversation. A man from Wisconsin would lean on his umbrella and grumble about the country, the weather ct.

It was a dreary cloudy day for late April.

After riding a long time with nothing but prairie to see—we passed a sod hut. Then they called his attention to "the great and magnificent improvements." He was provoked and "talked back," when one told him they were only obeying the bible command which said "When a stranger comes along, take him in."

Augusta was the Land Office, and all but six of the passengers stopped. We changed coches to a smaller one, with four horses. From A[ugusta] to Wichita we changed horses once. All but the Wisconsin man and I, got out and walked on. The walking was good. We had come all the way of the Santa Fe Trail, tramped flat by thousands of Texas cattle driven over it last year.⁹

The new teams were fine grays—and rather wild.

A little way from the stable was a draw or water course some what stony—or at least very rough.

8. If Abbie is speaking of the Whitewater river, she would not have crossed it until after she left Augusta. Between El Dorado and Augusta the stage road crossed no major streams.

9. Abbie left the Santa Fe trail when she left the railroad at Cottonwood. From Cottonwood Falls she may have traveled over a cattle trail to the railroad though that is not certain since Chase county residents prohibited Texas cattle from entering the area in 1871. She did not reach the Texas trail which has become known as the Chisholm until she reached Wichita.

The driver called "Make your selves firm." We went over the draw, and part way up the slope, on a run—then something happened. The driver yelled to the horses and finally we stopped. Then he yelled—"if there is a man in there, get out quick, and hold a horse. If I get down I will loose controll of all." Wisconsin was so long getting out, I felt like pushing him, and by the time he did, the man from the stable was there to help. He had started when he heard the driver yell to the horses.

They fixed the harness, and we started, only to have the same horse begin to kick something awful.

"Shall I get out," I asked. "Stay in with your baby." Again the pillow, blanket and shawl were taken for a baby. I got out, and the man who had walked on, came back, thinking they had gotten on the wrong road.

This time they had to go back to the stable for new harness. The driver explained that the horse that made the trouble, was a new one, on the team, and not broken in yet. We were detained about an hour, and it was nearly dark now. When ready to start, the driver said, "The lady and two or three men get in, and when the men let go the horses, I will drive like fury, slack up later, but not stop, and the rest can get in." He certainly drove like Jehu, and the men got in with considerably difficulty. The last ten miles, we almost flew. We certainly had a good driver, one who understood horses.

When we could see the lights of W[ichita], I began wondering where I would stop. The men began to talk about hotels, and one said, "there are two, one about as good as the other."

When we stopped at the first, the clerk came and opened the door and asked, "Any passengers for here?" When no one moved to get out, I said I would, and was the only one to stop there.¹⁰

In all that ride of 80 miles from 5-30 a. m. to 10 p. m. I was treated with the greatest respect. It was a great disappointment not to see or hear something of my brother. The clerk suggested that he might not have my letter—as he lived 20 miles out along the Ninescah. I was tired and went to my room.

It was a new hotel—the room was clean, but very simply fur-

10. The two hotels then open in Wichita were the Munger House, kept by D. S. Munger, and the Harris House which was advertised as the largest in town and the location of the express office as well as the stage depot. Abbie probably stayed at the Harris House for, in her diary entry for October 26, she indicated it had changed considerably since her first stay there.

The proprietor of the Harris House was the widow of J. E. Ledford who had been killed in a gun battle with Deputy U. S. Marshal Jack Bridges, Army Scout Lee Stewart and a lieutenant from the Fifth Infantry in the hotel yard on February 28, 1871.—*Wichita Tribune*, March 15, 1871; Nyle H. Miller and Joseph W. Snell, *Why the West Was Wild* (Topeka, 1963), pp. 43-45.

nished. The partitions were boards, and one could hear the talk in the other rooms.

I was very tired, for dinner I ate some lunch Rhoda gave me, not wanting to leave the coach when the men did, and before going to bed, I ate a little more. Before going to bed I fastened the door securely, and looked around the room, the partitions were all pai[n]ted? boards, and one could hear what was said in the adjoining rooms. Board ceilings as well as partitions. I put out the lamp and put the curtain up—when I noticed acrost the street a room with no shades or else not pulled down—and a number of men walking around in their shirts.

I slept well, felt rested next morning, and after breakfast the landlord went to the P. O. and there was the letter I had written Philip that I was coming. He then inquired if there were any teams going to the Ninnescah river, but found none. So I had to hire a team to take me out. They charged me \$7—for the open spring waggon, drawn by a pair of mules. The driver was a boy of sixteen.

We forded the Arkansaw. It was broad and sandy.

The water went over the hubs—but not into the waggon.

There were a few houses not far from the river, then we saw no sign of life, except a prairie dog town, until we reached [the Ninnescah.] In all that distance there is no timber except a very little along the Cowskin creek. The creek has very steep banks, and I was glad when we had crossed it. A fringe of trees came into view, and we were nearing the river. The driver said we will stop at McLanes [McLean's] Ranch, and inquire for your brother. The ranch was a one room log building, where they sold provision and whiskey.¹¹

We drove to the door and I asked for Philip. "Your brothers claim is acrost the river—and two miles up." "My Brother's" I said, "Yes you are his sister, you look just like him, but you cant cross the river today, See—" and he waved his hand toward a number of freight waggons, "they have been waiting two days for the water to go down." Another disappointment.

What will I do—where spend the night? I asked, and he said "go over to the house and stay with my wife."

11. A. C. McLean operated what was called "the Ninnescah ranch." It had originally been located by Edward Murray in the winter of 1869, but Murray left for a few months and when he returned a man named Charley Smith occupied the site and Murray turned over materials which he had gathered for a stockade ranch to him. Jacob "Dutch Jake" Swindinger and Bob Lytle were involved to some degree but eventually McLean and George P. Russell acquired the land. For the next two years it was said to be the "rendezvous for all the desperados along the border." J. G. Dunscomb bought them out in 1872 (see cover picture and sketch between pp. 248, 249) and they left for Bluff creek, Sumner county. McLean was later involved with Billy Brooks and was nearly lynched with him in 1874 as a suspected horse thief.—Andreas-Cutler, *History of Kansas*, p. 1387; Miller and Snell, *Why the West Was Wild*, pp. 53-57.

The driver was going back as soon as he had fed the team, so I wrote a short letter home, and gave it to him to mail, as W[ichita] is the nearest P. O.

I then went over to the house, which was a dug out, and acrost a little draw. It was built in the bank. Mrs. McLain was very cordial, not having seen a woman for some weeks.

She had rheumatism, and was not very strong. Her daughter of twelve—and a negro girl of fourteen did the work. Some of the freighters took their meals there, while waiting for the water to go down.

I slept a while in p. m., but not long, for Mrs. Mc[Lean] waikened me. She said, "You have slept long enough, I am lonesome for some one to talk to." We took a little walk up the river, but she was not strong enough to go far.

There were sheets stretched acrost the room, dividing her bedroom, from the kitchen, where I slept on the floor with the girls. It was not a sound sleep, and when he came in at a late hour, I heard her say "I am so glad you have come. I was afraid you never would." He told her there was no danger, but I heard that there often were rough times at the ranch when so many men got to gether. *I learned later that there was gambling and shooting—rough times generally—at the ranch house.* When morning came, I hurried to the river to see if it could be crossed. The first man I met, *a man with a revolver and boeknife [bowie knife] strapped to his belt*, said they would try in a couple of hours. *He looked savage—but was very polite.* After the men had breakfast, Mrs. McLain [McLean] the girls and I ate; then she gave me a sun-bonnet and we went to where they were doubling teams, and taking one waggon acrost at a time. It was hard going. I thought one little team would drown, but they made the other side—and were soon on the old Texas trail.¹² Then one team—the big team was taken back, and hitched as leaders to another waggon, and that crossed safely. It was quite exciting to watch them. Mrs. Mc[Lean] knew how anxious I was to get to my brother, and told one of the men. "All right she can get up on my waggon," he said. I was helped away up on top of perishable goods which were piled high and roaped on. Those in the waggon box got partly wet.

What a trip it was—past a few cottonwood trees, then down into the water, which had a swift current.

By the time I began to get dizzy—the leaders struck sand, and we were soon on the old trail, where horsemen and teams were

12. The Chisholm trail, though it was not yet called that by local residents.

waiting to cross north, but waited for the freighters to come over first.

When the driver came to help me down, he asked "where are you going"? "To my brothers, two miles up the river," I told him. "Have you ever been there" he asked. "No, but I can easily walk that far," I answered. "You know nothing about it; stay where you are until we get up to Murrie's [Murray's] Ranch— he will help you."¹³ There I stayed for he drove on and when we reached a log house—he called to a man at the door— "Murry [Murray] this lady wants to go two miles up the river." Then he helped me down, I thanked him, and he drove on.

I told Mr. Murry [Murray] who I was— He said I could not walk, he would get me a horse. I should go in and wait, and off he started. I looked around the room, which was lined with shelves— on which were goods, those usually kept in a frontier store. The ranch was built of logs, you stepped over the lower one to get in.

While I waited— army waggons, drawn by six and eight oxen went by. They belonged to the 6th U. S. Cavalry. Soon a number of officers passed. *They had been in Texas, and were going North, while a Reg. from the North were going South to take their place.*¹⁴

All this time Mr. Murry [Murray] had been driving a bunch of horses and ponies into the correll that was near the ranch. He brought an Indian pony to the door, put on it a mans saddle, and then I mounted from the log acroust the door, and he told me how to go.

I could not see the North [Robert West] house— it was beyond a strip of scrub trees along a draw or water course. I was to ride up around that, then I would see the North [West] house, and they would tell me where to find Philip. He gave me a letter that had been left with him, for Mrs. North [West].

So I started, on what I hoped to be the last leg of my journey, with the six or eight loose horses and ponies, trotting along. Sometimes ahead and sometimes behind. I was fearful they might get kicking or do something to excite my pony and make me trouble. Hower they were all pieceable—and seemed to enjoy the going.

After rounding the draw, I could see the North [West] house way down toward the river. There was a garden in front of the house, and not wanting the horses to spoil it, I stopped some distance back and called to the woman at the door to come and get a letter. When

13. After losing the Ninnescah ranch Edward Murray, the first settler in Ninnescah township, had chosen a quarter section on the other, or south, side of the river. The Chisholm trail ran through his land.

14. "Six companies of the Sixth U. S. cavalry, from Fort Richardson Texas, passed through town last Sunday [April 30] en route to Ft. Riley."—*Wichita Tribune*, May 4, 1871.

she came— I asked where I could find my brother. "He is here" she said and called him. At last, at last, I was so glad I believed I cried a bit.

After telling him how I crossed the river—and Mr. Murry [Murray] getting the horse ct. I said "I am so glad to be here— there were all men down there." He said "Behave like a lady, and you will be treated like one." I shall never forget his saying that. All the same, I felt out of place although I could not at any time have been treated with greater consideration.

When I told him the 6th Calvary were going to cross, he said he knew men in that reg. and would take the pony and her bunch of followers back to Murry [Murray], and see the men.

It was then arranged that for the present I should stay with Mrs. N [West]. Mrs. N [West] was a talker, and I soon had the lay of the land. A Scotch family by the name of Rose [Ross]¹⁵ lived acrost, and up the river. When a party of young men came here last fall to locate, they stopped with or near the Roses [Rosses], and helped build some houses— North's [West's] and Philip's and a dug out near North's [West's] where some of them stay.

Mr. N [West] was clerking in Whichita, Mr. Smith¹⁶ freighting. Some doing carpentering work ct. All earning money to pay for their claims. The men in the vicinity had gone on a buffalo hunt.

Before they left, they helped Mr. West build his house, about 14 by 12. There are big cotten wood trees along the river, and they build with them. There was but one room— a bed, a stove, a bench, two stools, table, trunks, and a few cooking utensils. Store boxes were used for cubbords. In the dug out, was a barrel of provision, ct. Mrs. W[est] did not know how to bake yeast bread, but could bake good salt risin bread. Mostly, however, she made biscuits. On the bench she had a sack of flour, & a bucket for water and under it, a two qt. tin bucket into which she put pieces of bread or biscuit that were left, and covered them with water. In time it would sour. I saw it ferment and run over some times—Well when she made biscuits, she poured that sour water off, and used it with soda to make biscuits. She was a genteel woman from Ohio, beautifully fitted for a pioneer wife. She was a little older than I, but not strong, and had doctored a good bit. She told me "a Dr. told

15. William Ross had been born in Scotland in 1830. The Ross family, which came to Kansas in August, 1870, had six children—Andrew, Janet, Elizabeth J., Agnes B., Sarah M., and Maggie M. Ross later held some local political offices and served in the legislature in 1877.—Andreas-Cutler, *History of Kansas*, pp. 1407, 1408.

16. This may be Bowen Smith whose land was north of Philip's, or Samuel Smith whose land was to the south. Either of them may also have been the Smith arriving in September, 1870, with the group Abbie mentions which helped build several houses in the neighborhood.—*Ibid.*, p. 1387.

her she was made of finer clay than most people." She longed for the time they could pay for their claim, and move to town.

Philip was going along, when he accidentally cut his leg. He was fishing, and after cutting bait for the hook, stuck his hunting knife into his boot, then stooping suddenly had cut his leg. So he stayed that he could better care for it. A neighbor woman stayed with Mrs. N [West] at night, and Philip had come up from his cabin to the dug out to be near the woman while the men were away. When Mrs. N [West] saw me coming, and the loose horses racing around, she thought a party of Indians were coming, and called Philip to stay with her until they moved on—That is how he happened to be there, and fortunate it was for me.

Philip took the pony to the ford— and the soldiers had not yet crossed. He met a number that he knew. He arranged to bring my trunk & ct. up next day, as the water would then be low enough to cross without any trouble.

MAY 2ND—Left Red Oak Shelter the 25th [of April]. On the train that night, the next at Cottonwood Falls, next at Wichita, and the next at McLains ranch, and then here the 29th. Had no chance to write in journal until yesterday, when I wrote until tired. . . . My trunk and bundle came up today. The water has gone way down—no trouble to cross now.

This is a new settlement. A year ago I understood there were no white woman within 15 or 20 miles. *Now there are several families scattered along the River.* Last winter the Osage Indians camped along the river. Their tepees are still standing, I have been told.¹⁷

[May] 8th—Mrs. N [West] and I walked to the river, I wanted to see the Indian tepees, When nearly there, a skunk blocked our way and we fled in haste. As soon as Philip gets to Wichita and lays in a supply of provision, we will move to his cabin. This is the Osage Preemption Land, or The Osage Trust Lands, You select a claim of 160 acres, then you "file on it." After living on it six months,

17. William Ross had located in Ninneseah township on August 12, 1870. On the 18th he cleared off nearly four rods of the river bottom, "stirred it up with a pitchfork, and sowed a package of turnip seeds. That was the first crop. About the last of October 1870, 300 Osage Indians camped near this patch, got on a drunk and harvested the turnips. . . . The Indians . . . were on their last hunt, and were accompanied by their old chief Chitope (or Chetopa)."—William Ross' history of Ninneseah township in John P. Edwards, *Historical Atlas of Sedgwick County Kansas* (Philadelphia, 1882), p. 9.

and doing a certain amount of improvements, you pay \$1.25 an acre, and then it is yours.¹⁸

Philip has been on his claim that long, has broke some land, and planted corn. He and some men have selected my claim, and when he goes to W[ichita] he will "file on it." Then no one can file on the same land.

He selected a suitable place, and plowed it for a garden, not having a harrow, he hitched the oxen to big brush and dragged it back and forth until it was well raked.

The garden is about a mile from Norths [West's], I have no hoe yet, but with the help of a stick, I have managed to plant a number of seeds. Katura [Rhoda] gave me garden seeds. I hope they will grow.

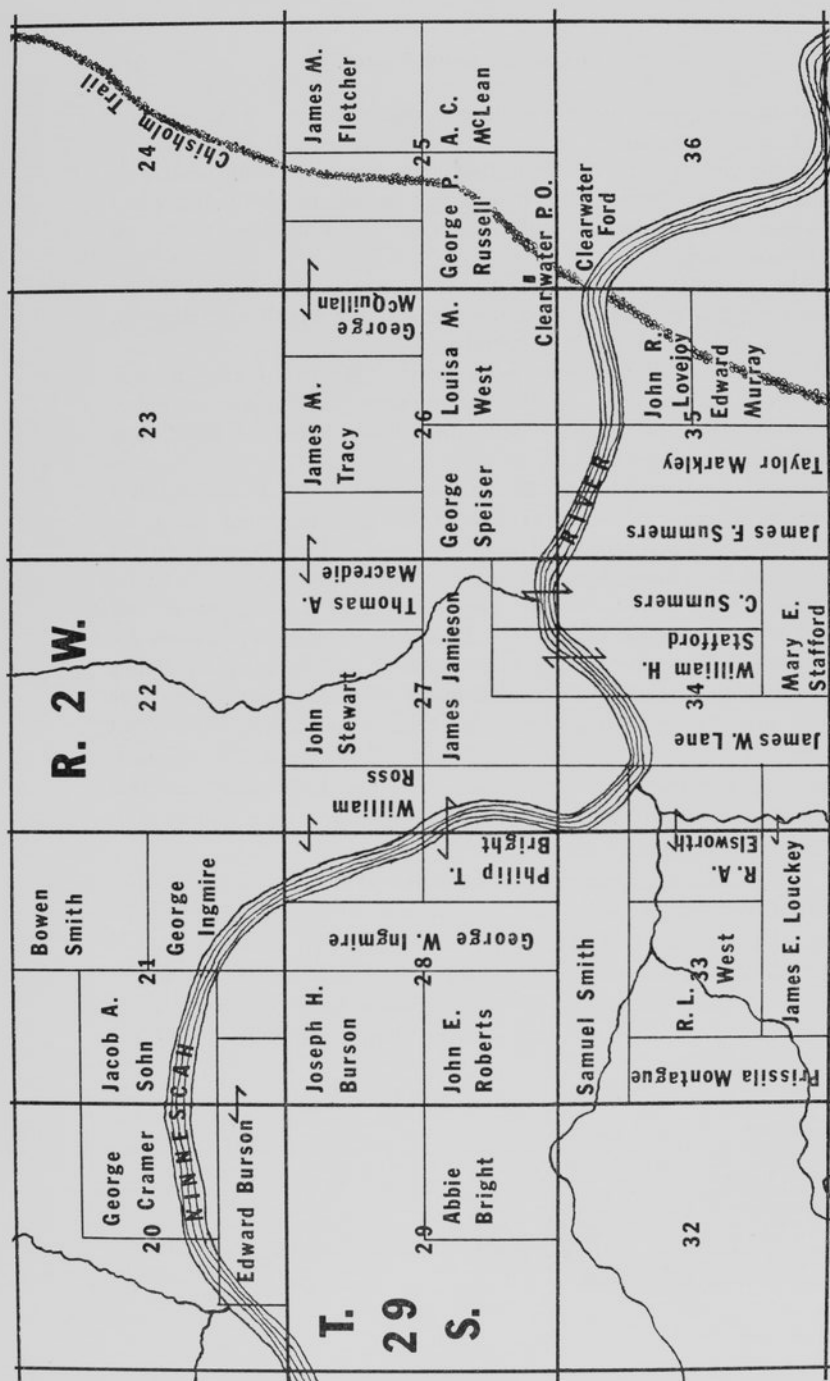
One day when going to the garden, I saw three antelopes and a coyote. There are three deer around, the men see them and I see their tracks in my garden. There is a heard of buffalo twenty miles out. The boys have promised to take me along when they go again. The last time they were out, they brought in a lot of meat, and that is what we are using now. Provision is scarce—potatoes \$3, a bushel. The railroad 100 miles away, and the men on claims raising their first crop. *Native cattle are very scarce, and the Texas cows are so wild they cannot be milked. Nevertheless, I get along very well and will stay here until I get tired. There is a Scotch man living a crost the river, a Mr. Ross— he was telling me that "this is such a healthy country, if they want to start a grave yard, they would have to shoot some one."*

They have been breaking sod near here with yoke of oxen. One man drives, one plows— and one followes with an ax— he chops into the upturned sod, and drops corn in the cut, puts his foot on the place, and takes a step and repeats. I will watch that piece, and see what it amounts to. We live on buffalo, fish, bread, molasses and coffee. All have good appetites. I dont drink coffee— but we have good water. . . .

Mr. Rose [Ross], the Scotch man, was talking about shooting, he

18. The Osage Trust Lands were opened to white settlement by an act of congress approved on July 15, 1870. The Indians verified their removal to Indian territory and the sale of their Kansas lands with the signing of the Drum Creek treaty, September 10, 1870. One of the Osage signatories was Chetopa, mentioned in Footnote 17.

Once the land had been surveyed, any white settler, the head of a family or 21 years or more older, could take 160 acres after having lived on the site six months. The price per acre was \$1.25. No settler could take more than 160 acres though qualifying members of one family could each take land.—John Joseph Mathews, *The Osages, Children of the Middle Waters* (Norman, 1961), pp. 685-692; Anna Heloise Abel, "Indian Reservations in Kansas and the Extinguishment of Their Title," *Kansas Historical Collections*, v. 8, p. 107; *Wichita Tribune*, April 27, 1871.



Plat of the Clearwater area as it was being occupied by the first non-Indian settlers. Present Clearwater, started in 1884, centers in the James M. Tracy quarter section, northwest of "Old" Clearwater P. O. on the Texas (Chisholm) trail.

said he liked to shoot crane, "they came down like an old pair of pantaloons." As to the truth of prairie dogs, rattlesnakes and owls, living together, he had not been able to prove it.

MAY 12—Last week a party of Indian Chiefs—passed up the trail, on their way to Washington, D. C. They said they would stay "two moons."

I have not seen a single unmarried woman since I am here. There are seven married women in this neighborhood and I will not likely see another all Summer. They all teas me, and say I am a curiosity to the many bachelors around here.

Now I must write letters.

[MAY] 16—Yesterday I finished a shirt for Philip, and got dinner. Buffalo stake, radishes, bread, molasses, stewed peaches, and coffee. A greater variety than usual. At 3 p. m. I walked down the river a mile or more to see Mrs. Lane. I can cross the draw near the river, when the water is low, and there I saw three gars—a kind of fish, but not good to eat they say.

Coming home, Jake [Jacob A. Sohn] who had been working down the river, overtook me. *Jake is one of the young men who came here last fall when Philip did, and took up a claim.* He and Philip sleep in the dug out. The Lucky woman [Mrs. James E. Louckey?], who had been spending the nights with us, has company and dont come now.

Philip's ankle has not healed yet, from the knife cut. I feel uneasy about it. I am so anxious to go to his cabin, I think it would be better for us both.

[MAY] 19TH—Early in the morning we can hear the prairie chickens drumming. I wonder if it is their mating song, or are they hunting nest locations. Yesterday I went up to the garden, was gone from 10 to 4 p. m. I boroghed a hoe. Hoed the beans, peas, planted corn ct. It was very warm, and I was tired out.

We have little twilight here. The sun sets, and in a few minutes it is dark.

MONDAY [MAY] 22—Mr. N [West] spent Sunday here. *He is a nice looking schoolery man. More refined than she.* He brought our mail from Wichita, a bundle of papers and letters. There is some talk of having a post office at the crossing. We would get our mail more regularly if they would.¹⁹

Brother started to W[ichita] early this morning. Now I hope we can go to the cabin soon. He has been working up on my claim

¹⁹. A post office was established at Clear Water, with George P. Russell postmaster, on April 5. Perhaps word had not yet been received locally.—Robert W. Baughman, *Kansas Post Offices* (Topeka, 1961), pp. 26, 226.

when he felt well enough. Katura [Rhoda] gave calico before I left and I am making a dress. My wardroab is rather a slim affair, but it does for this frontier life.

[MAY] 25TH—This has been a busy week, Mon. worked in garden and sewed. Tues. washed and ironed. Wed. made a tick and two sheets. Today went down to the cabin where we will live, until the dug out on my claim is finished. Coming back, it rained, and I got wet through my clothes. So many new flowers: mats of sensitive plants—a vine that is sensitive if you touch a branch or vine the leaves close with a base of red bloom. prickly pair in bloom and many new plants I do not know. One day I saw what I thought was a white cloth on a stick, way beyond my garden. So I walked to it, thinking some one had staked out a claim. Behold it was a white flower on a long stem.

[MAY] 27TH—I am baking yeast bread, with dry yeast Katura [Rhoda] gave me. Will write while it bakes. When finished I will go down to the cabin, and hope to stay. Would have gone yesterday, but my bed tick, was not yet filled with wild hay. This is frontier life for sure. The bread is baked, and "a perfect success." I am jubilant over it, wont Philip enjoy it.

[MAY] 29TH—Keeping house at last; moved last week. The cabin is back from the river, with big cottonwoods trees in front. The wind in the tree tops keep up a constant sing-song. The cabin is 12 by 12 feet, with a fire place made of sticks daubed with mud. *The roof is split limbs covered with dirt, and now there is a growth of sunflowers and grass on it.* My bed is a curious affair. Sticks with crotches are driven in the ground, and then limbs laid acrost, and resting at the head on one of the logs of the house. Then poles are put acrost, and the tick, and so my bed is fashioned.

Along one side I have stretched the double blanket, shawl, and the single shawl acrost the end. It is very nice, but a warm place to sleep. Cook in the fireplace. Have a dutch oven, a skillet, teakettle, and coffeepot. When Philip batched, he had a kettle in which was water and flour, hanging up out side the house, when he wanted biscuits, he poured of[f] the sour water. Now we have yeast bread, and dont need anything of the kind.²⁰

20. In a letter Abbie wrote to "Mary" on May 28, she described their diet as adequate "even if we dont have much variety, besides our garden is coming on. Pease & beans will be grand without butter or milk, we can put in a piece of side meat. Mrs. Wests gardei. is very nice, she has salad radishes, & onions, these two or three weeks. . . . [For eating utensils they had] 7 tin pie plates 5 tin cups 2 deep dishes, a lamp, 4 knives & forks, 1 big spoon 2 little ones. Mrs. W[est] gave me a nut meg grater, then I have several tin cans for salt, sugar, pepper, soda. Philip bought a keg of molasses 5 galls. 10 lbs. of lard, a sack of flower, 10 lbs. of sugar 16 lbs. of coffe 1 lb. of tea, 2 of rice, 6 lbs. of dried apples and peaches, 4 qts beans, soap ½ bushel salt. A nice little tub and wash board, and a plow, a very good one too. 6 lbs. of side meat, and a nice large basin that I use for a dough tray. wash dishes in the pan on the oven. . . ."—Letter in manuscript division, KSHS.

Mrs. Lane told me how to make pie out of sorrel leaves—or wild oxalis. the kind that has a purple flower. *It tastes like rhubarb when baked, but* I could not find any, and as the crust was made, I patted it flat, and made a crumb pie, which I knew Philip would like.

[MAY] 31ST—Mrs. N [West] moved to town. She gave me her cat. Cats are very scarce here. J[ohn] R[oberts] an acquaintance of brothers is stoping here. Not very convenient to have him. He has selected a claim next to mine. I am kept busy, sewing for Philip, caring for the garden and cooking. The baking is tedious, can only bake one loaf at a time in the dutch oven. I kneed a loaf out, when that is light, I put it in the oven, and kneed out another and when the first is baked, the second goes in oven, and the third is kneed out. All the time I must keep the oven hot enough to bake and brown the bread, which is quite a task and takes three hours or more. But Philip likes it, and so I enjoy baking. It takes me all fore noon to bake a batch of cookies, Can only bake five at a time.

JUNE 2ND—We have a table now, Jake said we should have the one up at the N [West] house. I believe he made it. He was down for dinner, and took J. R. back with him.

Supper is ready. *For supper we have buffalo, gravy, onions, radishes, molasses, bread, coffee.* I was to the garden. It is so far away, and someplaces I waded through grass almost up to my shoulders.

JUNE 4TH—This has been an unusually long day—and I feel depressed. A shower is coming, hope it will cool the air. *Had some heavy rains last week.*

The heavy rains raised the river, and a heard of cattle in crossing, stampeeded, and 15 or 20 were drowned. Every week 7 to 10 thousands of Texas cattle are driven north over the trail. If the cattle stampede, and dont want to cross the river, the hearders yell and fire off their revolvers.

Sometimes we hear them here, and it sounds—as I suppose a battle does. It is the cattle that keep the trail worn so smooth. Their droppings are called “cow chips,” and when dry, are burned by those who have no wood.²¹

Before Mrs. N [West] left, two skunks fought on her door step—then ran to the spring, and scented that, that they could not use the water. Mrs. Lucky [Louckey] carried a revolver at her side, but

21. More longhorns were driven north over the Chisholm trail in 1871 than any other year. Estimates are that 600,000 came up that year while the next largest year, 1873, only 405,000 were driven to Kansas.

Abilene's last year as a cattle shipping center was in 1871, the year James Butler “Wild Bill” Hickok was city marshal there. In 1871 also Newton enjoyed a brief and violent period as a major shipping center.—Joseph Nimmo, Jr., *Report in Regard to the Range and Ranch Cattle Business of the United States* (Washington, 1885), p. 28.

when a skunk scared her she forgot to use it. I have not seen her since Mrs. N [West] moved. I think she moved too.

It is windy, and the cotton wood seed is flying each with a bit of cotton, making it look like a snowstorm. Here come the boys and the rain too.

[JUNE] 6TH—Baked to day, A family of Springles [Summers] live not far from Lanes. They are from Virginia. *He was a slave overseer. He has his second wife.*²² Frank, a son by his first wife, is a nice young man. *He has gone up to Wichita to work. I had a letter from him, asking me to correspond with him, but I have so many letters to write now.* [He] . . . is home part of the time, and goes hunting with the boys. Some time ago, he gave me three arrows he had taken from a buffalo he had shot. The Indians had shot the arrows, but none went deep, and the buffalo got away from them, and was killed later by Mr. S[ummers] Philip says you cannot kill a buffalo—unless he is shot in the eye—or back of the shoulder, and hits the heart.

Philip put a couple of sticks or canes at the door, and charged me never, never to leave the house with out one. There are some snakes around— one passed the door this a. m. and ran into the brush, before I had a chance to kill it.

JUNE 8TH—P[hilip] brought letters, papers—and a pack of seeds from the ranch. They talk of making it a post office. I wish they would. Then we would get the mail regularly. Now who ever goes to W[ichita] takes letters along and brings back mail for the settlers.

[JUNE 10]—The sun is setting, and the sky is gorgeous. Yesterday I went down to Lanes— acrost the draw—or branch, which was so high I had to wade. Always a trouble to put on shoes and stockings again. Today I baked and finished reading *Lena Rivers*. Am now reading *Martin Chuzzlewit*.²³

One of the boys gave me a bunch of buffalo sinews.

They use them for thread, and to fasten arrow heads to arrows. P[hilip] showed me some bushes—called arrow wood, that the Indians make their arrows from. . . .

[JUNE] 11—*There is large herd of Texas cattle grazing South of here. It is not safe for a woman to be out where they see her. They would go for her. They have such big horns, they look frightful. I have a hoe now, and my garden is doing finely. Mr. Ross a Scotch-*

22. C. Summers was born in Virginia in 1819 and came to Kansas in 1868, settling first in Atchison and then two years later in Ninnescah township. His children by his first wife were James F., Nancie E., Sallie, Elisha B., and Lucy J. After his first wife died he married Mary J. Bacon and their child was named Ida M.—Andreas-Cutler, *History of Kansas*, p. 1408.

23. *Lena Rivers* was a popular novel written by Mary Jane Holmes in 1856; *Martin Chuzzlewit*, a novel, was by Charles Dickens.

man who lives a crost the river and up gave me some seed of a "pie mellon," he said I should ask permission of the neighbors before planting it, as it was a rapid grower, and would run over the whole neighborhood.

The mosquitoes are so bad, and it is so warm at night in my little bed room.

JUNE 12—This is the third week I am housekeeping, and in that time there has been but one woman here besides myself. No church, no parties, a wild Indian sort of a life. Plenty of time to commune uninterrupted with Nature, and Nature's God.

I like it, but if some one said I must stay here always, then I fear I would not.

[JUNE] 14—We are having such a pleasant rain, I saw a deer to day leaping along through the grass. To day we heard the Indians had made a [raid on] Bluff creek and killed a man. That is only 35 miles from here.

Soon after I came, while I was with Mrs. North [West]— a minister came from W[ichita] to go on a buffalo hunt. He preached Sunday, we went to hear him at Springers [Summers']. Monday he went hunting with the boys. I saw a deer leaping thru the grass—over toward the garden.

[JUNE] 17TH—Mr. Rose [Ross] called acrost the river, that there were letters at the ranch for us. Philip will go down, and I can send what I have written home, to be mailed.

[JUNE] 18TH—Good long letters, and papers from the East came yesterday. Very warm but not dry. Back a way is a big bunch of cow tongue cactus in bloom [with] large yellow wax like flowers. If it was home how it would be admired. To[o] warm to walk now. When I came I enjoyed walking, and did quite a bit.

Early in the spring, before the Indians left, They burned a strip from the river towards the prairie. The dried grass all gone, one could see piles of buffalo bones, and their wallows—where they had rolled until the sod was gone. Into these wallows, sunflowers and other seeds had drifted and grew, and now are nearly as high as I. This morning I washed, hung the clothes on the bushes to dry. Browned coffee, and put more hay into my bed tick. Now it is 3 p. m. I am going to the garden for radishes and peas for dinner tomorrow. John made a rolling pin for me today, before that I used a tin can to roll pie crust and cookie dough.

[JUNE] 20TH—I visited at Roses [Ross'] to day. This is the first time I have been across the river since I came. Of course I had

to wade— The river is low. I wore my new calico dress and a white apron. Thought I looked nice. Wonder if I did? I carried a cane, not because I looked gay . . . [nor] *do I carry it to keep the beaus away*, but on account of snakes, and no rocks to pelt them with. I enjoyed my visit very much. The Rose [Ross] children have been down several times. They are very interesting. The eldest will soon be a young lady.

A Mrs. Ingraham²⁴ called while I was there, I will try and call on her soon. She did not seem well. It is so different on that side of the river. A high bank, then prairie as far as the eye can see. The trail to W[ichita] too is in sight.

While at R[oss'] four hearers came there horse back. One rode such a pretty pony. O, but I would like to have it. Rather wild looking men, with their revolvers in their belts. One of them was a Mexican. They have straight black hair, and dark complexions.

It is so warm like July in Pa. Sometimes I wish july was past, but it will pass quickly enough.

[JUNE] 23D—I was too busy to write yesterday. Baked such good bread, then dressed the biggest turkey I ever saw, Philip had been saying for a couple days that if that turkey did not stay away he would shoot him. The breast I sliced and fried like stake. Mrs. Lane came, in time for dinner. . . . *She would have me go with her a ways. I went as far as West's house. Jake was not home. We opened the window and got in. We just spooked around. Drank his coffee, put his pipe in coffee pot spout & ct. We were sitting out side in the shade eating wild plums, and chatting away when Jake came.* She urged me to go home and spend the night. Jake said if I would he would go down and get supper and breakfast for Philip.

Philip is not well, and I felt I could not leave him that long. I told Jake to go with me and get some turkey, which he did, and after supper went home with enough for two meals, and Mrs. L. took enough for her and Mr. Lane two meals, and we have some left yet.

Brother has been ailing all week, think he is a trifle better this eve. The bugs are coming in, I must put out the light.

[JUNE] 24TH—Philip had the ague very bad to day. Jake brought us some fine wild plums he had found.

[JUNE] 25TH—This morning it was so rainy and Philip so sick he could not attend to his oxen. When the bread was baked, I put on his boots— and went up to get someone to move the oxen I was

²⁴. Probably Mrs. George Ingmire who lived north of Philip's place. In her other diary Abbie called the lady Mrs. Ingmire.

a wet fright when I got there, and did not go in the house. Mr. Smith was there. I met him when I came down in April, but he had been away several weeks freighting. He is from Maine, and one of the nice men I have met in Kansas. He wanted me to ride one of his horses back, but I declined, as I was wet already. I hurried back, and he and Jake soon came to see Philip.

Last Fall Mr. Smith had several acres broken on his claim. This Spring he was away when it should have been planted. The high winds carried sunflower seed over it, after the sod was turned, and I saw it the other day two or three acres in solid sunflower bloom.

[JUNE] 27TH—The Rose [Ross] girls were here yesterday, and I exerted my self to entertain them. They wanted to go to Lanes—but it was too far. Then they teased to go and see Jake. Found him writing letters. *He had been out to dinner and was dressed up, and looked better than I had ever seen him. He is from Ohio.* All these young men came here last fall as did the Roses [Rosses]. They helped build the Rose [Ross] house—a two story one— and stayed there while locating their claims, and building another house or two.

Mr. Rose [Ross] told me many funny things that happened last Fall and Winter, and some more provoking than funny. "When the house was roofed, they all slept in it but your brother, he slept by a hay pile. I had gone up to W[ichita] and bought a load of corn. Every day that pile of corn grew less, and I thought your brother was feeding it to his pony at night. Well after a time all that slept in the house were lousy. Then we knew why he preferred to sleep out, and he was the only one who was not lousy. I found out too—where the corn was going, and that party soon left these parts."

JUNE 29TH—A little rain this a.m. and cooler since. Yesterday p.m. I went to Roses [Ross']. Her parents and brother have just settled on a claim not far away.²⁵ They were going over, and asked me to go along and call. We had a merry ride and a pleasant call. I do like to hear Schotch people talk, although I cannot understand all they say. The river is very low. The Rose [Ross] children caught a 25 lb. catfish in a pool. No trouble to cross the river now. But one must be careful not to step on sandburs before getting stockings and shoes on again.

25. Mrs. Ross was the former Janet Macredie, daughter of Samuel and Janet Macredie and sister of Thomas J. Macredie. She had married Ross in 1855.—Andreas-Cutler, *History of Kansas*, p. 1407.

Mr. Smith brought me a letter from Mother and three from friends. All keep well at home. I made two fans from the feathers of the turkey Philip shot, also one for Mrs. Rose [Ross] from feathers of one he shot last winter.

Philips ague is broken, but he looks so bad.

Was to the garden this a. m. brought down a lot of cucumbers, and sent them up to Roses [Ross?].

[JUNE] 30TH—Went to Lanes this a. m. Had intended going to see Mrs. Springer [Summers] but she was not home.

Two more Companys of U. S. Calvary went north. They spent one night at the crossing. The Majors name is Harper. He is from Bucks Co. Pa.²⁶

26. The troops were also from the Sixth cavalry. The officer was 1Lt. (Bvt. Maj.) William Harper, Jr.—Francis B. Heitman, *Historical Register and Dictionary of the United States Army* (Washington, 1903), p. 502.

(To Be Concluded in the Winter, 1971, Issue)