1. INTRODUCTION

INTERPRETATIONS of the American frontier rely upon the analysis of vast numbers of individual experiences. Those of the Clarkson brothers may be taken as typical. Charles Ross Clarkson, eldest of the three sons of Matthew Flint Clarkson, Sr., to migrate to Kansas in the late 1860's, was born August 29, 1839, and "raised on an old-fashioned Durham cattle farm" near Bath, Steuben county, New York. He enlisted as a private in Battery E, First regiment, New York light artillery, on September 10, 1861, and, after reenlisting in 1863, was honorably discharged on June 23, 1865, at Syracuse, N.Y., having been wounded twice in battle. A Russell county newspaper recorded in his obituary that "After the war closed all his chums being killed, he was so lonesome that he came west." But by his own account, published in an 1897 Ellis county newspaper, he served until the war's end when a spirit of restlessness coming over me I went back to Washington City and joined a party who were going to take a government wagon train through to Fort Riley, Kansas. We started some time in July and arrived at Fort Riley in December, as near as I can recollect, having been about five months on the road. I didn't stay long this trip as I had the ague and had been having it all the way out, and I was more dead than alive. So I went back to [New] York state as fast as I could get there. However, in 1867, I thought I should like to see Kansas once more, so I packed my grip and came back again. This time I stayed.

While in Kansas he hunted and trapped wolves along the Cimarron river. For several years he freighted for the government between Fort Hays and Fort Dodge, and also for a man "by the name of Silverthorn who was running a train of 100 wagons each drawn by six yoke of uncivilized Cherokee and Texas bulls." Early in 1868, according to the best circumstantial evidence, Matthew Flint Clarkson, Jr. (born May 16, 1850, at Bath), and George Bernard Clarkson (born September 30, 1852, also at Bath), arrived at Hays City, then at the end of the Kansas Pacific railway line, and found employment as teamsters for the government. When their brother Charles joined them two months later, probably after March 22, 1868, he homesteaded the section of land on which lay the largely deserted town of Rome, one-half mile west of Hays City, and the three moved into buildings in all likelihood abandoned by victims of the cholera which swept through the region during late July and early August of the previous year. From this base camp the brothers hired out as woodcutters, supplying nearby Fort Hays with timber, and both the fort and Hays City with buffalo meat procured two days out of the week during warm months and almost daily during the winter. By September, 1872, they had fulfilled the residential and agricultural requirements for their homestead, and with their teamsters' wagons embarked on an eight-and-one-half month buffalo hunt, responding, in all probability, to W. C. Lovenstein's prospects for buffalo hides. During this outing they killed at least 12,000 buffalo, even though they were among some 2,000 hunters on the plains of western Kansas and eastern Colorado that winter.

Upon their return they established a ranch on the Saline river in Russell county, raising

6. Copied from the Bible of Matthew Flint Clarkson, Sr., by Emilia Ann Cooper Clarkson.
7. U. S. Army, Fort Hays Quartermaster Department, Reports of Persons and Articles Hired. Records of the Office of the Quartermaster General, Record Group 92, NARS. The reports for October through November, 1867, contain no mention of any Clarkson on the payroll. It should be noted, however, that several months' returns are missing from the file.
sheep and various crops while continuing business as a firm of teamsters. By April, 1875, they could declare on the agricultural census that in the previous year they had paid $2,550 in wages and planted 47½ acres of rye, spring wheat, corn, sorghum, and Irish and sweet potatoes. Though not well-to-do they were clearly successful as ranchers and farmers, and were popular among their bachelor neighbors.

Matthew and George both married during July, 1876, Charley waiting until 1880. By the late 1870’s all three had settled into private agricultural and domestic pursuits and had become respectable members of their communities. Charley, more enterprising than his younger brothers, established a post office on October 28, 1878, at Clarkson (later Fairport), Kan., and some years later a hardware-general store in the same town. The Clarkson brothers’ lives after 1880 have not yet been studied in detail, but by that time the frontier had retreated from western Kansas and the Clarksons were simply three good, upstanding citizens among many.

The manuscripts which appear on the following pages are reproduced in their original form as far as was possible. Books one and two were written in Big Chief tablets entitled, respectively, “FIRST” and “Matt Clarkson Papers” on their covers, and are in Matthew Clarkson’s hand. They were evidently written in response to Charley’s death on December 29, 1926, but prior to Matt’s 1931 visit to his brother George in Larned. Both books, written in pencil, lack punctuation altogether. Consequently all marks of punctuation, i.e., periods, commas, question marks, dashes, and quotation marks, have been supplied by the editor, and the reading of these manuscripts is therefore at many points open to several interpretations. The editor has chosen the reading which seems to fit best with the chronology suggested by the available facts. The orthography of these manuscripts is uncommonly inventive; emended spellings are in brackets following those words which defy straightforward phonetic interpretation. Missing letters have also been supplied. In addition, there are two further peculiarities which should be noted. Matt Clarkson frequently transposed letters, especially m and n, and care has been taken to preserve every such instance. Secondly, the letter w is always capitalized in these manuscripts, this evidently being the only form of the letter known to Matt. The editor has taken the liberty of reducing all w’s to lower case, even when the letter begins a sentence or proper noun. All other letters which are upper case in the manuscripts are reproduced as such in the following pages.

The manuscripts, entitled “Some stories told by Matt Clarkson of experiences of the Clarkson Bros Buffalo hunters,” is a series of anecdotes Matt Clarkson related to Will D. Philip, an Ellis county rancher and longtime friend, possibly during January, 1931. Judging from the order in which these anecdotes were recounted, this manuscript seems to be as much an index of the relative importance these events held for Clarkson as it is a documentation of life on the Kansas frontier. The final two or three anecdotes seem to have been related in part by George Clarkson.

The editor worked from photocopies of Books one and two but has so far examined Book three only long enough to note the pagination and to correct a few errors made in earlier typewritten copies of the manuscript. All three manuscripts are now in private hands. Portions have previously appeared in print, notably in William A. Hill’s Historic Hays (Hays: News Publishing Co., 1938) and Wayne Gard’s The Great Buffalo Hunt (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1959), but with little corroborative evidence. It is the aim of the editor to rectify this situation.

12. An account book from this store has been preserved in the Hays Public Library.
14. Matt sent a letter postmarked “Larned January 19 1931” to a “friend nr. hillard” recounting his visit with George.—“Sara Fields Scrapbook.”

15. The Hays Daily News, January 8, 1931, reported that Matt Clarkson told Hays that day “for the Philip Ranch where he will be a guest of Will Philip for a few days.”

16. The first typewritten copies of all three books were made by Floyd B. Streeter, librarian at Fort Hays Kansas State College, 1926-1956, and were deposited at the Stemberg Memorial Museum and Forsyth Library on the Fort Hays campus.
II. THE MANUSCRIPTS

BOOK ONE

in the spring off 67 that M F clarkson & george clarkson came from the state off New york too kansas, landed at hays city," there were 22 saloons & three danse halles & one litel groser store by treat & one cloesying [clothing?] store. i tell you, there was some hot times. we did not think any thing off having one or too dead men—some was soldiers—on the streets nearly ever morning, for we had no law, the six sho[alter] was the law. fort hayse was heat [head] quarters for shipping goods to colorado & arizona & new mexico. 16 there wore scores off freight trannes, ox traines & mules trains, & you bet there was some hot times there. we thought that something straying was going too hayen if we didnt have a de[a]d man for breakfast. we had a buring ground that was caled boot hill grave yard. 17 they wasent

17. "The first location or settlement in Ellis county was made on the west side of Big Creek, north of the grade, by Lell Bros., of Salina. This was in the latter part of May, 1867. This town of Rome was already in decline by August, 1867, yielding to "her successful rival, Hays City."—S. Motz, Historical and Biographical Sketches, in (n.p.: Old Settlers' Association of Ellis County, n.d.), pp. 3, 23. The Rocky Mountain News, Denver, citing a telegram from Fort Hays, reports, on September 7, 1867, that "a large number of buildings are going up" in "two quite large towns...being built by the Big Creek Land Company, of St. Louis," both, curiously enough, called Hays City. The Hays City Railway Advance in its first issue of November 9, 1867, noted that Hays was then "about three months old." Moreover, Frank A. Root, who visited Hays City on December 21, 1867, wrote in the January 6, 1868, Atchison Daily Free Press that "the land on which the city is located was purchased from the Railroad Company last spring and the town was laid out in August by William E. Webb, who afterwards formed the Big Creek Land Company and was chosen President. The first building was erected early in September.

18. Apparently Clarkson was mistaken in his chronology, for Hays City was established in the spring of 67. Charles Clarkson made the final payment on his homestead on March 22, 1873 (see footnote 28), and following the provisions of the Homestead Act would have filed on this land before March 22, 1870, but after March 22, 1869. If Matthew and George arrived in Hays City just two months before Charles Clarkson's act of filing, then the time of their arrival would, by this inference, be set at mid-January, 1868, or some time thereafter.


21. The site of Rome, now identified by a historical marker along highway 40, lies largely within a bend of Big Creek, one-half mile west of present-day Hays and north of the Fort Hays Kansas State University grounds.

22. This was probably Jack McGee, a mule driver from Texas who stabbed police constable Frank Shepherd on August 11, 1871. He was taken from the county jail that night and lynched by Shepherd's friends.—Kansas Daily Commonwealth, Topeka, August 15, 1871; Ellis County News, November 15, 1917.

23. Fort Dodge was founded in 1864, and by late 1867 the government had officially established the Fort Hays-Fort Dodge trail.—Leola Howard Blanchard, Conquest of Southwest Kansas (Wichita: Wichita Eagle Press, 1941), p. 319; Minnie Dubois Miller, "An Old Trail Rider's View of the Past," Kansas Historical Quarterly, v. 43, no. 3 (Summer, 1977), pp. 464-465. After the Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe railroad reached Dodge City, five miles west of Fort Dodge on the Arkansas river, the Fort Hays-Fort Dodge trail eventually lapsed into disuse for military supply transportation.
Charles Ross Clarkson (1839-1926), above, was the oldest of the three sons of Matthew Flint Clarkson, Sr., to migrate to Kansas in the late 1860's. Early in 1868 Charles's brothers, Matthew F. Clarkson, Jr. (1860-1932), right, and George Bernard Clarkson (1852-?), below, arrived at Hays City, then at the end of the Kansas Pacific railway line. The photograph of Charles was taken in 1923, and the one of Matthew was also taken in his later years. The photograph, below, left, shows George at age 17; the one of him, below, right, was taken in 1915. The photographs of Charles and George are reproduced from the Russell Daily News, November 2, 1955.
ing wolves. He had pretty good success [success].

27. They had a pr[et]ty g[o]od load off wolfe hides, and they was pretty high then.

28. and then charlie put ailing [filed] or on the quarter that rime was on, that was the first town, and when it was survaied [surveyed], the railroad sa[??] seen? it was government land. so they built the depo east a mile in order too get it on railroad land, and then they called that hays city. so we maid rime our home for three years & better. thre was thre ston[e] buildings & one log house, so we maid smoke houses off them. and then we chopped wood on gig [Big] creack [creek] in the sumer off 67 and soled it to the goverment. we got ten dolars a cord for elem wood & 15 for ash, and we maid a good stade. we also would take too days in the wek & kill enough buflos to supply hays and the fort in meat. we chopped wood all until september, and then we went to huntin and dring [drying] meat. and when it got cold enough so that the meat woudn't spoilt, we

shiped fresh meat to kansas city & would ta[ke] all the big ones far [for] to dry, we dried severl car loats and shiped too ch[i]ago and bufflo New york and kansas city. we hunted for meat and a fue off them haid good roabs. we saived them & got the ind[i]ans to tan them on the halvs.

29. we haid 75 bearres [barrels] too salt meat in, and then we wood dig a hole in the ground and plug up the holes off a big bull hide and pin it too the ground. it woud hold about too bearres. we was fixed so we could salt a hundred bearres at once. there was no time too play to get our smok houses filld. we saived ever[ly] tung so as we would know how meny we kiled. that is the way we knew in all we kiled 22 thousen.

30. we had 3-4 mule teams & too mule team so we could hall about six to seven tuens [tons] at a time. the meat would keep longer than it will know [now]. we could hang meat up in a tree—and i have saw it just dry up—and cut the meat thin, and would hang it on bushes and let it dry. that is what we called girked meat. it is pretty good for too carrie for a lunch. that is the way that the indians keeps there meat, and that is all they have too live on. also fresh meat. so you se that they had too fallow [follow] up the gaim [game], and they didint like to have the Whits [whites] killing ther game. it was enough for too make them hostile. we would have bin w[o]rse than this nith [manuscript difficult to read at this point] indians was.

we hunted a foot, the lever [leveger? lower?] the country, the better. we would git astond on them and kill from ten too forty in a place, the most at one stand charlie and i killed—fifty four. it dint take only about five minutes to cut the hams off and the tung, and we left the rest. we could load a wagon in 30 minutes [minutes], as soon as we got too loades, we would let them go too hays so they could get them salted qu[lick] and they wouldent be all in at once. george tended to the smokeys

27. Around $1.00 to $3.50 per pbh—Times and Conservative, April 13, 1889.

28. Charles Clarkson paid $375.45 for lots 1 and 2 of the northwest quarter of section 32, township 13S., range 15W. in Ellis county (comprising the original site of Rome) at the receiver's office in Salina on March 22, 1873. On November 18 of that year he conveyed the same property by warranty deed to Elizabeth Allen, wife of Martin Allen, a prominent early day real estate agent in Hays—Deeds and contracts, book E, p. 404, and miscellaneous records, v. 8, p. 80, office of Ellis county register of deeds, Hays.


30. Matt Clarkson is probably again referring to the summer of 1868. In fulfillment of the agricultural requirements of their homestead, the Clarkson brothers "rusted boards and wire. Put out a large garden with a fine lot of pumpkins. Were afraid of a buffalo stampede but hoped it would not come. One day heard a rumbling. Looking out saw the buffalo coming. When a buffalo had a patch of wire or scantling entangled in it it would run faster. Soon things were leveled and not a pumpkin in sight."—Hill, Rome, the Predecessor of Hays, p. 12.

31. In 1894 the Hays City Sentinel reported that Charles Clarkson and George Smith "handed the first lumber used in the construction of barracks [sic] at Fort Hays."—Hays City Sentinel, July 24, 1894.

32. Citing a letter John K. Creighton sent January 9, 1875, from Camp Supply to his brother William Creighton, a Leavenworth newspaper stated that "there are at present a thousand Pawnee Indians there [at Camp Supply], engaged in tanning buffalo hides."—Leavenworth Daily Times, February 9, 1875. It is possible that the Clarkson's employed a few members of this tribe for the same purpose.

33. Cumulatively (as a lifetime count), not simply during their first year on the plains.

34. Three four-mule teams and two two-mule teams—five teams in all.
houses most the time. We killed severl thousen on the saline & also on the smoky hill river. in 78 we hunted buffalo an[d] dried meat & seplied hays with meat. also the fort. in the winter we shipped meat gr[jean to kansas city, but we saived all the big ones too dry & we lead [had? killed?] lots off ant[el]ope[s]. we made a camp on the south side off the smoky on spring creek and we got three loads & they went too in too gernell [Grinnell] staton and Mat, george, ray, charley & staied to kill another load. but that knight there was a band off indians came in after knight and camped about a q[uarter off mile below us. and we didnt know eny thing about eny indians being near. so we went out hunting, and when we came in we had no camp. the indians had took ever thing and one mule, tent, blankets, grub; so we drove all knight in order to catch [catch] the morning train, & charlie came down too hayes city and got a nue supply. they got a bout four hundred Dolars worth of stuff. they staid out off our sight or we would of fahd some blud [blood]. we never got the mule, we got an new suply and went back a gain but didnt se the indians. they went south. it maid lots off the hunters quite nervis for sometime. 30

35. Creeks are spreded all over Kansas and the simplest and most obvious name for such a creek is to call it Spring Creek. According to an early record forty-four streams were named Spring Creek in Kansas.—John Byrlyford, Kansas Place-Names (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1972), p. 16.

36. Between September, 1868, and March, 1871, Grinnell Springs Station and hunters' and surveyors' camps within its vicinity were visited by marauding Indians at least eight times.—Mrs. Frank C. Montgomery, Fort Wallace and Its Relation to the Frontier, Kansas Historical Collections, 1926-1928, Topeka, v. 17 (1938), p. 235-244; Linnie J. White, "Indian Raids on the Kansas Frontier, 1869," Kansas Historical Quarterly, v. 38, no. 4 (Winter, 1972), pp. 388, 387.

37. Unidentified.

38. Matt Clarkson almost certainly knew of the Dull Knife raid of 1878, in which a group of Northern Cheyennes, disgraced and angered by the treatment they had received at the Cheyenne and Arapaho agency at Fort Reno, Indian Territory, left the agency on September 9, 1878, for their northern hunting grounds, killing settlers and stealing livestock on their way west toward Kansas.—Sharon S. Fawwaz, "The Dull Knife Raid of 1878: A Study of the Frontier," master's thesis, Fort Hays Kansas State College, Hays, 1983.

Although the orthography of the 1878 date in Clarkson's manuscript is firm, it seems more probable that he has here labeled an incident of the late 1860's or early 1870's with the year 1878. The following reasons are offered in support: 1) by 1878 buffaloes were exceedingly rare in northeastern Kansas; 2) Clarkson does not actually say that any Indians "camped about a quarter of a mile below us," despite the fact that when a part of the group was subsequently captured near Fort Belknap, Neb., on October 23, 1878, they numbered 149 and had with them 100 head of stock, while the rest of the group numbered 114 individuals upon their surrender of March 25, 1879; 3) the Cheyennes were almost continually heading north during the 1878 raid, not south; and 4) it is unlikely that Clarkson would have recorded nervousness, but no fatalities amongst contemporaries of the raid, since at least 19 white settlers were killed in the vicinity of Oberlin alone.

39. Established October, 1859, and abandoned July, 1878. The Clarkson brothers' eight-and-one-half-month buffalo hunt, the basis for most of their buffalo-country experiences, began in September, 1872, for by March 13, 1873, the Hutchinson News was able to report that "Charlie Clarkson of Hays City has killed 3,000 buffalo since November." By September 19, 1872, the Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe railroad had reached Dodge City, thereby eliminating work for a great many trappers.—Gard, The Great Buffalo Hunt, p. 100.

40. The editors of the Hays City Sentinel "were in hearing of a knot of old buffalo hunters the other day, who were recounting their adventures with and around the bison" and in 1876 reported that "George Clarkson, who now resides on the Saline, just at the corner of this county, killed, within one mile of his camp on the Smoky south of Trego, inside of four weeks, 1,300 buffalo, averaging two shots to a head. He afterwards fired 5,000 shots from one camp upon the Republican." George, 23 years old in 1876, appears to have been mentioned by these "old buffalo hunters" though not himself present. Consequently the story is second-hand and attributable to George the killings Matt here claims for himself which should indeed total 1,300.—Hays City Sentinel, March 1, 1875.

Trego, a post office in Trego county established November 20, 1874, was previously named Park's Fort and on February 6, 1878, was renamed Walkaway.—Robert W. Baughman, Kansas Post Offices, May 29, 1829-August 3, 1867 (Topeka, Kansas State Historical Society, 1961), p. 128.

41. Richardson and wife lived at Coyote station, the second station west of Ellis' on the old K.P. Railroad in 1871, and a Ben Richards still lived at Coyote by November, 1876.—William E. Connelly, ed., Life and Adventures of George W. Brown, Kansas Historical Collections, 1926-1928, v. 17, p. 114; Hays City Sentinel, November 15, 1877. After the attack of June 4, 1869, in which the mail train left at Stilson at 6:00 a.m. was delayed by Indians four miles west of Grinnell, a Leavenworth newspaper reported that "Guards have been detailed by Captain Overstone from the Fifth Infantry, by order of General Schofield, to be placed at Monument, Grinnell, Buffalo and Coyote. Five men are to be stationed at each place. They are now ready to leave and will go on the first train."—Times and Conservative, June 5, 1869.
walice [Wallace] and our teams hadent com in yet, and i walked out to our camp. it was on white woman [creek].

i wouldent have knone where to half [have] gone, but charley & i went & located a camping plase first.

it was quite an undertakking to start out there a foot and no roads. it was about 55 miles, but i found camp about 9 oclock that knigh[t]. i could see the camp fire ten or 12 miles before i got there. you bet i was tired & hungery, but charlie was so wel plaesed that i had com, for i could skin as men[y] bufloes as eny too off them. we killed 19 hundred Bufoes in three weeks [weeks] and hailed [hauled] them in to wallace. we only saved the hams off the big ones & the hind quaters off nice fat cows too ship too kc [Kansas City] and topeka. i will give you some reference. Mr aimes & george hart and Mr duey & too others from russell came to our camp on the white woman and they haid squirrel rifles [squirrel rifles]. and they couldent kill Bufoes on acount they was not poor [power?] enough, and we hired them too hall as the bufoes was going north. we had all haled in too wallace in 3 wee[eks] & then we went north about 30 miles & struck camp again & staid there about 40 days.

we killed twenty four hundred Bufoes & number off antlopes, and then we had too go north west over on the republacin. we camped

42. Also known as Punished Woman's creek, and sometimes confused with Ladder creek.

43. In his biographical sketch of Charles Clarkson, C. F. S. Aimes of the Russell County Record wrote that "during the winter of 1871 and 1872, and while i was on the buffalo hunting grounds, Charley and Mat were camped on Ladder Creek, southwest of Monument station. W. H. Dewey and I were camped on the same creek, three miles east of Charley's camp, and the buffalo having stampeded south across a 40 mile stretch we visited Charley's camp and remained with him throughout the day, exchanging memories of Civil War days. While there we discovered that Charley and Mat had 6,000 buffalo hides dried and stacked around their uncomfortable dugout. At that time buffalo hides were selling at $1.90 for cow, $2.90 for bull and 60 cents for calf."—Paradise Farmer, January 10, 1927. George Hart also lived on Paradise creek.—Hays City Sentinel, August 31, 1878.

This photograph of Hays City was taken by Alexander Gardner in 1867, probably about one month after the town was established.
Matthew Clarkson wrote that when he and his brother, George, arrived in Hays City in 1868 "there were 22 saloons & three danse halles & one litel grocery store . . . & one closeling store." The photographs above and far right are early views of South Main and North Main streets. The photograph of the freighter's house, right, was taken in 1868.

at the big spring and we haled to kit carson and we camped there about 30 days an kiled 8 hundred Buffloes. and then we moved north west too the riceree [Arikaree] & struck camp. it was a good camp, for the indians was camped on the plat[e] river & they kep them [the buffaloes] drove back. they kiled horse back & we hunted on foot. we hunted there about 3 weeks and the mal[j]n herd went south east, and we falerd [followed] them. we Mad[e] our camp on the north fork off the soleman [Solomon], north off gernell station, & we hunted about 21 days. we kiled 400 hundred bufloes and then we moved on the sapy [Sappa creek].

was there we kiled 300 hundred, and then we moved on the south off the solman [Solomon]. it was the nises [nicest] winter that ever i saw up till the tenth day off May, and them [then] we had a bliserd. & it kiled lots off bufloes & wild horses. the bufloes & horses were giting pore & they chilled. and i fased that storme for 35 miles to camp and found the boys all in bead. the chips was all wet. you bet they was tickeld when i com[e], i had 20 railrod ties, so they built a fire in the tent and got su[p]per. the storme lasted three days.

we staid there untill the first of gune [June]. & then charlie took all the teams? but too and george and i and one man, and we went over sout[h] on the walnut & shure enough, we run into a band off indians. they had gust [just]

44. Several natural springs occur along the south fork of the Republican, southeast of the Arikaree, in Cheyenne county, notably in section 16, township 35, range 41W, and in the southwest quarter of section 10, township 35, range 40W.—Glenn C. Prescott, Jr., "Geology and Ground-Water Resources of Cheyenne County, Kansas," State Geological Survey of Kansas, Topeka, bulletin 100 (April, 1953), pp. 35-37.

45. Kit Carson, Colo., 40 miles west of Kansas, lies west-southwest of Wallace.

46. This three-week time period is given later in the manuscript as six weeks, see, footnote 58.

47. On the first or second day of May, 1873, the "regular train which left Denver . . . was snowed in near Ellis and was delayed several days. . . ."—Saline County Journal, Salina, May 8, 1873.
kiled the burden [Jordan] out fit,* but we didn't [know?] that untill we cam in. so we made up our minds that we would stay untill we got a load off'hides. so we went up the crick ten miles.

the next day we went out too hunt and i saw a herd off bulls [bulls], so we drove up a reutive [ravin?] untill a bout a quarter off a mile and i wanted george to go with me, but he said no, that he would stay with the[e] teames. so i went, and i had kiled eight[t], and there was one that was sulen. i had shot him three times and he wouldn't lay down. the herd was to fur [far] over the hill. si* shot for his hard [heart], then he started for me, and i gumped too my feet and started too get behinde one off the bufaloes that i kiled. i was about ten steps when george shot and brok[e] his back. maby [maybe] you think i wasent tickled. i didn't kno george was arund. he laied still in some grass.\textsuperscript{39} we got our loads and got too hayse about the midle off gune [June].

october 72 we moved from the smoky river too lad[d]er creek, & the bufaloes wer auful thick and itt was wore [warm] and the Bufaloes were not very wild, and it was not munch off a job too kill all we could skin. we aimed too skin from a h[und]red & fifty too 200 a day. i have skined 40 big bul[l]s in a day. that is the truth Mat. we kiled about 7,000 bufaloes.

48. Richard and George Jordan, Richard's wife Mary Smith Jordan, and Frederick Nelson (or Noman) left Park's Fort about August 15, 1872, intending to hunt buffalo for six or seven weeks. On September 30, 1872, a hunter named Hunt (or Kent) reported finding two wagons of the Jordan party 65 miles south of Buffalo Station. Upon reinvestigation by military authorities, the bodies of the three men, shot by bullets and arrows and scalped, were discovered at the site. Though the massacre, which probably occurred in late August, was variously blamed on the Kiowas, the Northern Cheyennes, the Sioux, and the Arapahoes, Mrs. Jordan was never recovered. Howard C. Raynesford reprinted most, if not all, of the primary sources, and has provided first-hand testimony besides. Raynesford determined the site of the massacre to have been in the southeast quarter of section 13, township 17S., range 36W. in Ness county, and has provided photographs and a map of the site.—Howard C. Raynesford, "Jordan Massacre, Ness Co., 1872," History—Ness County Collection, manuscript department, Kansas State Historical Society.

Matt Clarkson identified these Indians with those his own outfit saw on the Walnut during the early summer of 1872 (or 1873), but there is little reason to believe them to be the same Indians.

49. Possibly the "one man" mentioned previously.

50. Undoubtedly this is the same incident also found in Book three and cited at footnote 71.
in that camp. We called that the slau[gh]ter pen. well, i recurrict [recollect] that one wind[e] day that Mr aimes and Mr deuy and g a hurt from russell came too our camp for a viset and staid all day, consulting old times and talking about the sivel [Civil] war. we haid a good viset.21

let me give you my opin[i]on off the indians as some off the amairkans [Americans] call them. My opin[i]on is that iff the amairicans was drove from one co[a]st too the other that we would bee worse than the indians have bin.

stop & think. when america was discovered, the indians was hear. How did they come hear? i belive that our maker put them hear. you se that there was sevr [several] diferf tribes & there was some diference in the tribes, the same as an ingles [English] man & an irish man. my opin[i]on that the our maker gave them this country, but we was enlighten[ed] enough & had the pow [power] too keep Driving them back. and i know by experience that the indians woudent bin half so bad iff it hadent off bin for the white men that wood get with them and they could plot for them. that would give these white men a chance to plunder. i know this too bee the fact in severl cases. gest [just] look at the indians. they was ignorant too our ways, but yet they undr stode [understood] one another, & some one must off gave them this molage [knowledge], for they all had a way of worshipping the master. i belive that god gave them that entiligant [intelligence], for God says i will right [write] my law up on your harts & in your minds, i will place them so all sall [shall] no [know] me, from the least to the greatest, and i belave [believe] that is where the red man got his kenoj [knowledge] from. they all have a way off worshipping the lord. but yet you will say that they are savages, for they fight among them selves; and that is true, but dont all off the americans do the same. and not only that, they have gred [great] arsnels manufactoring guns And amuniton all the while. now iff you can see the difference i should like too kno.22

BOOK TWO

dear friends, as i lo[ou]ck. Back and think off the old times when we first come to hays county in 67, gust [just] think off the old timers that are gon[e]. there is only too that i can nain [name], that is mick huffmire and guge gilksen left.23 it seems sad and lonley too me. and the sadest off all, brothe[r] charlie passed away December 28 [1926] at the age off 87 [and] 4 months, and he was an old vetren in the civil war. and he lived at fairport24 & near by since 73. we went too masourie [Missouri] & bought 800 hundred sheep, and they done fine until they got the scab. they multiplied until we had a bout 3000 he[a]d and they got the scab, & we lost lots off them. we got tobaco by the hogshead & steaped it up, and it was so strong that it made the boys all sick. but we would take a map [nap] and go at it again. we was 7 days before we got dun.25 we haid lotce [lots] off raing [range], for there wasent me[n]y sleters on the river. there was on the south off us Mr dunlap, on the west gon klay and Mr rastel and Mr gyrey, and on the east off g gyval. and there wasent eny one until you got to paradise [Paradise] creek, & there wasnet only a few on paredise greek [creek? jack?] calan and dick calan, tom morgan, bob gack, hume frink, Mr me doyl, mr baswell, W gonsan, Mr waid, fred sieglars, martin camp,
"There was some hot times" in the frontier town of Hays City, Matthew Clarkson wrote. "We did not think any think off having one or two dead men on the streets nearly ever morning." These two Fort Hays soldiers sprawled on the boardwalk were killed by a fellow trooper September 6, 1873.

osker rine hart, james maloney on eagle creet [creek] & oliver alen mintons.56

Mat and fletcher hal—he had bin working for about four years. he was like a brother, the [he?] was the best hand i ever saw. and we went north off kit carson on the rickree [Arkansas] and w[e] killed and salted meat, and we pilled the hides as fast as they dried. we dug holes in the ground and put a big hide, and pin it fast too salt meat in. we camped there a bout six weeks and we had a big pile off meat and hides, for we had killed about too thousand Bufaloes. as i only had too mule teams we couldent hall [haul] match to the road, so the Buflo was moving east south east. i took too loades in too kit carson, and hall wanted too go with me, so we left too men in camp.

the night we got ther tha [they] haid a an indian scare. they was a fruid that the indians waz a goin too take the plaise, so we had gards that knight, but they dident atac [attack] it. the next day, i loaded my grocer[iel] up and berrell says too me, "you haint going out too Day." "yes i an [am]." "no, the indians will have your scalp." i told him that i would get some off them. fletcher had bin puty [pretty] brave untill that day. he sais, "i will quit if you are going out too day," i said that i had a camp and too men, and that i was agoing to look after them. so hall quit, and i rode down too charlie too hayse to send up the teams off too hall the meat and hides in too the road. and whem [when] george came, i took one man and one teaen [team] and my poney and went too words [towards] walice. and when i found a good plaice to camp and lotce off Bufloes, i made camp.

but the first knight, the man i had turned too be a trater [traitor], we had a full mone [moon], we slep in a tent, and i herd the led [lid] fall shut, and there stood my man. i could se[e] that he had a belt a[nd] too six s[hooters] in the belt. and i leveled my gun on him and know [now] i said too him, "now you drop that belt, or i will drope you. do it quick, too. now you

56. The spellings of the following names have been verified through the 1875 state census and in early issues of the Russell County Record: Dunlap, Bartell, Juvenal, Boswell, Johnson, Reinhardt, and James Maloney.—Kansas state census, 1875, v. 53, Russell county, Paradise and Fairview townships. The correct spellings of the other names remain problematic.

57. Charles Clarkson’s mother’s maiden name was Mary L. Hall.—“Standard Certificate of Death,” for Charles Ross Clarkson.

58. This incident is undoubtedly the same one cited in footnote 46 when the six-week time period is given as three weeks.
W. F. "Buffalo Bill" Cody was one of the promoters of Rome, established in Ellis county in May, 1867. The town thrived briefly with 2,000 inhabitants and many saloons, but by the time the Clarkson brothers arrived in the county the town was virtually deserted, with most of the population having moved to nearby Hays City. This map, based on one compiled by Harry R. Pollock as a W.P.A. project during the 1930's, was redrawn by the Rev. Blaine Burkey, Thomas More Prep, Hays.

get away from there, ten steps. do it quick, too." then i gave him too blankets and i told him not too move untill morning, so i watched him. i got breakfasts, as soon as it was light i toled him too get our [out] off my sight. "what, you haint a going too turn me out a a foot wayl out hear." "yes, you thief, i ought[t] too kill you on the spot." and he dident want too argue the case, & left the camp. such was lif[e] in the[e] far west. i told wods [Woods?] that i would pay him when i got in wallace or leave it with pete rubendou [Pete Robidoux].

i hunted in seventy three, & charlie and george freighted but[ter] & ege [eggs] from guerr [Jewell] city & beloit and supplied the government. genrel custer was camped at hays. and i took fletchere hall & thee [three] mour men and struck out for a hunt. we found plenty off buflos on the smookey hill river for 7 weeks, and then they went north west, and we had too fallere [follow] them, and we hallled to gernell station. we had kiled and haled in about

Peter Robidoux, born March 23, 1830, in St. Remi Province, Quebec, came west in 1868 and kept a general store at Wallace (named for nearby Fort Wallace) from the early 1870's to 1893, when for some unknown reason he one day closed down business altogether, never to reopen. He was also Wallace's first postmaster.—W. F. Thompson, "Peter Robidoux: A Real Kansas Pioneer," Kansas Historical Collections, 1936-1938, v. 17, pp. 293-298; Montgomery, "Fort Wallace and Its Relation to the Frontier," p. 246; Western Times, Sharon Springs, August 25, 1938. See also, Frank M. Lockard, Black Kettle (Topeka: R. C. Wolfe, n.d.), pp. 25, 31 for evidence that Robidoux knew Charles Clarkson.

50. This incident is also found in Book three, and cited as footnote 72.
According to the records of the Sharps Rifle Manufacturing Company, this Sharps rifle (serial number CS3352) was shipped to Charles Clarkson in Hays City September 19, 1872. The 50-caliber sporting rifle has a full 30-inch octagonal barrel, double-set triggers, open sights, and oiled finished stocks. It weighs 16 pounds and uses a 2½-inch shell. The heavy weight helps take up the shock of recoil and also keeps the gun from heating up too fast.

Photograph courtesy of Arthur W. Petrey, Portland, Oreg., the present owner.

5000, and then we had too go north west up on the ricoree [Arikaree] north off kit carson.60 [1874] was the gras[sh]op[pler] year. i tell you, that was a sight. the grashepers were so thick that they was just like a cloud, they darkend the sun. they eat grass & the leaves of the trees. they would eat wagon tungs until they wer[e] r[o]ugh, & eny thing that wasent panled [panelled]. they dident stay long or i woudlent of bin hear to told the storie. there was a Man that owed us for robe hides. he lived 5 miles sout beloite. he owed us 350 thrile hundred & fifty dolars, & i went down ther for too get the money. i got a hundred dolars; and he had 6 milk cows, & he told me that he would take ten dollars a p[ile]ce. so i took 4 off them & took a note for the balence. & on the road home i could bough[t] a hundred heet at ten dollars a p[ile]ce. the road was line[d] with wagons, the people left the[i]r homestid and was going back too there wife[‘s] people. there was a few [few] that staid, and they lived thro[ugh]. some never came back. we bought lots off wheat at 50 cts a bushel for sheep feed.

in the fall off 74 charley and i went too hays city and took a contract too hall bage [bags?] & suplies for the goverment, and we didnt have teams enough. we hired wilie gonson [Johnson] too help and kelie corpping & Mr winters & charlie allen. they all had teams. we went down too camp slyly [Supply] & then we halled a couple loads off reigh [hay?] from dog [Dodge] too suply, and then we, and then the goverment wanted too send soldiers back too hayes, & we haled their bage. we were one days drive from the fount & it was sining [snowing?] and blo[w]ing, but the lutenant [lieutenant] said that we had to get too the fount, for there was no grub nor horse fe[e]ld. so we started. we couldnt see the road, so we had too go right against the storme. there was

60. This may refer to a buffalo hunt conducted after the one discussed in footnote 30. At any rate, by late October, 1870, Gen. George A. Custer had left Fort Hays, never again to be officially posted in Ellis county. A pardonable lapse of memory on Matt’s part, and further evidence of the lingering Custer mythos.—Rev. Blaine Buckey, Custer, Came At Once! (Hays: Thomas More Prep, 1976), p. 101.

The Clarkson brothers, like other early settlers in western Kansas, hunted buffalo for their meat and robes. Matthew Clarkson recalled that they saved the tongues, "that is the way we knew in all we killed 22 thousen" (the total for their lifetime of hunting on the Plains). The sketches of a hunter on foot, above, and of buffalo hunters with their wagons, upper right, were in Harper's Weekly, March 10, 1877. The photographs of buffalo killed for their hides, right, was taken in 1872. The Harper's Weekly sketch, printed April 4, 1874, far right, depicts the curing of buffalo hides and bones. During the winter of 1871-1872 buffalo hides were selling at $1.90 for a cow, $2.90 for a bull, and 60 cents for a calf, according to a 1897 biographical sketch of Charles Clarkson. Buffalo bones left on the plains by hunters more interested in the hides later were shipped to eastern processing plants for the manufacture of fertilizer.

one soldier that lost his horse, & he walked behind the wagons all the day until we wer with in 5 miles off the fourt, when he gave up, & then we put him [in] a wagon and covered him up, but he Died the next day. 66

there was a good meny froze to death in that storme. there was some that had a gug [jug] off whiskey by there bead [bed] side and they froze too death, & them that drank water or eat snow was all right. that storme lasted 5 days. cattle drifted from the saline too the arkansaw.

62. Christian E. Groff, a civilian of unknown age, died of the effects of frostbite on April 13, 1874, and was the only person at Fort Hays ever recorded as having died by that cause.—Civilian register, record of interments at the post cemetery from date of its establishment to February 16, 1883, in consolidated correspondence file of documents relating to Fort Hays, Kan., 1867 to 1889. "Records of the office of the quartermaster," Forsyth Library, Fort Hays Kansas State University, Hays.

in 73 we sold a four mule team wagen & harness[s] to Mr canckwet [Kentuck?]. he paid part cans [cash?] & then we took a mortchage [o]r the balance, & he made up his mind too go too the black hilles. & on the road one off the mules started back, and one off the hunters way up on the republican North west of welice [Wallace], and My best friend on earth was jim Mayloney [Maloney], the [he? they?] was up to hayes and he heard off that man and where the [he? they?] was camped, & he sais, "i will go with you tomorrow," so we started with out eny grub. i said, "we will strike lots off camps," but there wasent meny campes, so we just one taist off a coon, and when i think off it know [now] i can taste.it yet. and may god bless my old friend. he has gon to rest. jim and i would take our girls & go too rusell and osborn and hayes city, too, from parridice to clanses in a lumber wacon & have a good time.64
the 80[']s. it was dry in '80. i went too lea[d]vill[e] [Colorado], i took 15 ponies off mine and 25 for major wilson65 of russel co. he

64. The Clarkson brothers were well known for their convivial. By. See Russell County Record, January 6, 30, 1876; Hays City Sentinel, March 22, 1876; Hays City Sentinel, March 22, 1876, July 11, 1876.
65. Maj John Wilson and his wife Frances, from Aberdeen and Greenock, Scotland, respectively, were deeded land in sections 25, 26, and 27 in township 11S., range 14W., southeast of Paradise in Russell county, by members of the Jesse Cornell family on September 4, 1873—Deed records, v. 1, pp. 86-89, office of the Russell county register of deeds, Russell, Kansas state census 1873, v. 53, Russell county, Paradise township. Much of this land was subsequently mortgaged and sold during the following seven years.

In Book three Matt restates his encounter with Major Wilson, see, footnote 76.
gusst [just] sold his catel [cattle] and ranch, and he haid 25 worn out ponies an[d] sall [saddle] mules gust right for pack animales. that was the spring that they made a rush for the gun[n]ison, and anything that would pack sold from 75 dollars too a 150 dollars. the miners had a strike while i was there. i tell you, it was a perty hot time there. they had too get a the state molica [militia] out and shut all of the salunes [saloons] up. it lasd four weeks. i had too teans [teams] and i got work on the tole [toll] line from the rastrack too le[a]dvill[e], and i got sick with the mumps, and then i got the mount[a]in feever, & the docter told me that the best thing for me was too get down out off the mountainies, so i sold one team & then i came down too Denver, and that was the wors[t] place that i ever got into.

Peter Robidoux (1850-1927) arrived in Hays City in 1868, the same year that Matthew Clarkson wrote that he "landed" there. Later Robidoux had a store in Wallace where he traded merchandise for buffalo hides. Clarkson recalled finding a wild stallion north of Wallace which he sold to Robidoux for $240.

the stre[c]nts was lined with so called tramps, the railrods comp[an]ies advertised for lots off men, and they coulndent all get work. they was hot times for a s[h]ort time.

in '77 was the last experience i had in sheep, i sold goson [Johnson] twelve hundred he[a]d. he paid par down, and i took a mort-gage[er] for the balance. he was living with cornell stoe at that winter, and i was up there and i was a afraid that he was agoing too loose them all, and i told him so. so the next day i took My father in law[es] and we went up too see

the sheep and gonson, and i told him that under the surkstance [circumstances] that i would hafto close the mortgage. and he said, "will you give me one weak?" "sertenyl [certainly] i will. i just want too bee safe." so the next week he got the money, and that was all that saived him, for he went to feeding the she[e]lp. he lost nearly half off his she[e]lp, that was right wher charlie toolen lives. at hem time i had a homestead where worlie[s] house is know [now]. i lived ther three years and sold too worlie & B[oy]ly.

in the fall off [?] it was very dry. some, not much feed raised. and billa mar bought about 350 he[a]d off cows. he bought some off tom parker. he bought th[e] most off them at 10 dorars [dollars] per heed. roob crofnd [Rob Crawford?] helped gather them up. billa had some, and when they got ready too he had 500-40 hed. billa came over 3 times after me. i told him that i dendent wantoo goe, so he saw worlie and Mr w[o]'lie told that he wouldent start without mat[t]. so he came again, and bille said too me, "set your own [own] price, for i need you." so i told him 75 a mount. "all right, i will be over in the morning." & the next day we started. billa was short off men too drive t[w]o wagons and that was my lot. roob croffard was too look after the catel [cattle]. they drove them to osborne the first day, and the catel was aufell stiff the neax day. so they drove them 3 miles south off town and there was a section, it belonged to specter laoters [speculators]. rob toled the men too hold the catel their untill he come back. he said that he was agoing to anten [Alton?] so i camped and got din[ner]. and after diner it comenced sleanting [sleeting], and i told the men that i was agoing to portis." and they said that iff i was going, they was too.

by the time i got too portes, it was sle[e]ting pretty bad, & i had too go too miles north too find a paster [pasture] too put the catel in. and then we started back to portes. and i told mires [Myers?] too go ahd and tel[l] the stable bos[s] that we would take the stabi at my price, and rob gust [just] road up and he sais, "let me go." and he rode up and told the stable boss that we would take the stable. and bob turned the [his] horse quick and he fell off, and one foot caught in in the sturup [stirrup], and the horse wherled around three times before his foot got loos, and he kicked rob on the shin. and when we got there they had a Doctor there.

so it snowed the next [next] day and we had too lay over. and the day was aufel nice. and one off the men had too fetch rob back too osborne, so i asked rob how much money billa gave him. and rob said that i though[t] that he gave you money to pay expenses. i said, "no, i have got five dolars off my own." so we couldent find only 18 Dolars in the crowd [crowd], and they sa[i]d, "we will hafto lay hear untill we tel[e]graph Billa." and i said, "where are you agoing too find billa?" "i dont know." so they sa[i]d, "we will turn it over too you." well, i said that "you will haftoo [have to do] as i say." "all right." so i paid all up except[jin[g] 5 Dolars on the paster, and i told that man that we would drive out there 3 miles, & then i would kill a cow and he could get a quarter. while they got din[n]er i kiled a cow, and before we left i sold too quarters more, so i had enough to pay the next knight[s]' bill. i never was left in such a shape. no money too pay the Bills & damage. but i told the boys that we would get thru iff we had too kill one orr too a day.

thank god i met an old friend on oake creek, a[nd] he said that he had thirty dolars that i could have, and i could send it back when i got through. it took from [from] 15 to 20 dolars a day. some times [times] we wou[l]d have 25 dolars danaj [damage], gust think, four men driving five hundred and forty hed, and there wasent not much off the crop lensed, but we got three all right. and then we had too devide the catel up in three banches, too hundred calv[e]s too faten. when we got then [them] all right, bifie and i went down too belvill [Belleville]. that was the county seat of [of] Republic county. and court was going on, so we spent moste off the day there.

and about four of clock i had a stroke off prallice [paralysis] so bad that i couldent buten my close [clothes] up, nor i couldent talk, nor i couldent eat any thing, only sup[e] [soup] and raw eggs for three weeks. but i went right along with my work. mar tried too stop me but

67. The cities of Osborne, Portis, and Alton are in Osborne county.

68. An Oak creek (one of four in Kansas) runs from Smith and Jewell counties into the north fork of the Solomon river about a mile southwest of Cawker City in Mitchell county.—Nydjord, Kansas Place-Names, p. 59; Standard Atlas of Mitchell County, Kansas (Chicago: George A. Ogle & Co., 1917), p. 291.
i guss kep a going, after three weeks i got so as they could under stand part what i wood say, but it was nearly a year before i could talk mutch, and until too day it is hard too make popul [people] under stand me, and i thank god that i am alive yet. i tried 7 differnt dockers [doctors], but mone [none] off them done me eny good. when i wold feel num[b]ness coming on, i would get up and stir about & get my blo[od] too serculate frely, i dident stay only until about the m[id]dle off february, and then i came home for too co-mense farming.

BOOK THREE

In 1872 Matt & Geo Clarkon went east, one to Illinois and one to New York. Geo had very long hair & ever body admired it very much. When they got back they went buffalo hunting, (in the winter of 1873) Geo. could not take care of his hair so when they came in to Hays in the spring of 73 they went to nigger White’s barber shop to get shaved and Geo asked how much it would cost to have his hair combed. the barber said two dollars. so Geo said go ahead it took the barber a week at odd turns to finish the job.

Matt says the Clarkon Bros never took but very little liquor because he says if your head was befuddled with whiskey you could not think or act quick enough.

Matt & Geo were hunting buffalo south of WaKenny WaKeeney on the Walnut & ran into a lot of hostile Indians. so they turned back & found a lot more buffalo. Matt was out alone & shot a big old bull & was expecting him to fall but instead of falling he turned & tried to kill Matt. Matt got up & was running as fast as he could to another dead buffalo so he would have some protection when he heard a rifle crack & he said to himself My God do I have to fight a Buffalo & Indians both, but on looking round he saw the buffalo fall with his back broken. then he saw his brother Geo off at a distance, he saw the fix Matt was in & took a long shot at the buffalo killing him.

The Clarkon Bros had a camp north of Wallace & Matt came to Wallace after supplies. he hired a man to work for him who was told by friends was horse thief. but he hired him anyway. when he got back Chas & Geo were on a hunt. One morning very early he heard the mess box squeak. that woke Matt & he grabbed his gun & told the fellow not to move or he would kill him & let the coyotes pick his bones. the fellow saw he was licked so he at once unbuckled his belt with two guns & two knives & let them drop to the ground. Matt then ordered him into the tent & made him lie down on the bunk & Matt sat close by until morning with a gun on him. the next morning Matt cooked breakfast & feed the thief. then told him to start & the fellow says My God you are not going to start me out this way & Matt says you bet I am. you intended to leave me here alone. the thief had Matts saddle horse saddled & was at the mess box getting some grub in a sack intending to ride the saddle horse & lead the mules & sell them to some of his friends.

Matt Clarkson is a very slow talker & i asked him if he always had talked slow & he said yes sir I never wanted to say anything that I would be sorry for.

Wild Bill got into trouble with some soldiers in Tommy Drum’s saloon & drew two six shooters & started firing & backing towards the door, when he got outside two more soldiers began shooting at him so he kept the fellows in front covered with his left hand & threw his right hand up over his right shoulder shot backward & killed a soldier. he realized what he had done & thought he had better leave. his horse was tied behind the saloon & he jumped on him & started north. in 30 minutes there was a bunch of soldiers started in

69. “Uncle” John White, born a slave in Sumner county, Tennessee, in 1815, came to Hays City in 1878 and advertised himself as the “Pioneer Barber of Western Kansas” in 1876 Hills county newspapers. His shop was at the present-day intersection of 10th and Fort streets in Hays.—Hays City Sentinel, July 18, 1879, Rev. Baine Burkey, “Barber Shop Site of Most Patrician Murder,” Hays Daily News, January 28, 1972.

70. This paragraph refers to the beginning and end of the eight-and-one-half-mouth buffalo hunt described in footnote 39.

71. See footnote 50.

72. See footnote 59.

73. Undoubtedly an adaptation to his previously mentioned paralysis.
pursuit. When Bill got to North Fork he started down the creek & the soldiers thought he had gon North towards Stockton. Bill went down North Fork to Big Creek & on down to a wood choppers camp. there he had his wounds bound up & staid in camp about a week & the next that was heard of Wild Bill he was marshall of Ellsworth.74

An Irishman by the name of Reily had a saloon down where Cowans produce store now is & if a man came in with mony & Reily got a chance to put some scraped & scorched finger nail scrapings into his glass of whisky he would do it. that mixture would make a man very sick quickly when the fellow would take very sick Reily would have him carried to the back room on a cot then Reily would go in & take his roll.78

Major Wilson was a full blooded Scotchman that owned a big ranch North of Russell Kans (afterwards owned by Arthur Gear), the Major came to Russell Co with plenty of mony but liked to drink & play poker so his mony soon got away from him. so he went to Leadville Colo. then in 1880 he got Matt Clarkson to take a bunch of horses up there for him to be sold for pack horses. there was a gold rush from Leadville to Gunnison. the horses sold very high but that didn't help the Major much. he then drifted down to Denver & was tending bar there. he died in Denver in 1888.76

In 1871 a man by the name of Snappie was bringing eight loads of wood to the post from the Big Timber. they got to what was known as five (5) mile hollow when a most severe blizzard caught them. they unyoked their oxen & the eight men undertook to hold them but got so numb & cold that they could not even build a fire. just then a man known as Happy Jack that had worked a lot for the Clarkson Bros came down the draw leading a mule. so Snappie & Happy Jack started south to a ranch that was there, for help. when they were going from the spring to the house about three hundred yards Jack got lost, but Snappie made it. the men at the ranch went out & found Jack but so badly frozen that he died the next day. all eight men left at the wood wagons froze to death. Snappie died two months later.

The Clarkson Bros were hunting buffalo north of Wallace & went through the same storm but it was not nearly so severe up there. Mat says he hates to tell a story about men freezing to death when they had lots of dry wood but it is possible anyway. the men

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75. Christopher Riley's "Guider" saloon was on lots 1 and 3 of block 23, Hays City, granted him by warranty deed from Peter Tompkins on April 15, 1870.—Deed records, v. A, p. 6, v. C, pp. 325-326, ibid.

76. Mat's encounter with Major Wilson is also found in Book two, see footnote 65.
[were] awfully numb & a terrible blizzard was blowing.

Matt says lots of times a fellow would come out of a saloon drunk & shooting in the air exclaiming (I am a wolf hear me howl tonight), but he says very often he only howled a few times.

Jim Juvinough was considered a very bad man around Russell Co but Matt says if he did not have the drop on you he was coward. Matt had cut & stacked a lot of hay for sale & Jim expected to buy it later & told Matt to hold it for him. Matt said that the first man that wanted it could have it. Jim said if you don't hold that hay for me we will have trouble. Matt said let's have that trouble now. They were both armed but Jim just turned his horse & rode away.

Jim had a brother Dick & a fellow Joe Welden working for him. They went down to Texas & bought 2000 cattle & when they got here they had 7000.

I asked Matt if he ever caught a wild horse on the planes & he said yes. One of the Clarkson Bros were north of Wallace & found a wild horse with his front leg tangled in his mane which nearly touched the ground. He had not

77. A. E. Buddecke, contributing to the Hays City Sentinel issued in conjunction with the 1894 Old Settlers' Picnic, wrote that he and "Snuffer, the freighter" had "camped at a ranch on Smoky river," 12 miles from Fort Hayes. Buddecke's team arrived at their destination of Hays that night but Snuffer and his men "camped halfway for the night at the old Lookout stage station." Early morning the blizzard struck. The men tried to keep up fires but could not, and, as a last resort, they retraced their steps through a diagonal wind and lost their way. "Snuffer and his two men perished in the snow."—Hays City Sentinel, July 24, 1894. George W. Brown stated that the incident occurred at "Five-mile hollow, five miles out of Fort Hays," on November 13-14, 1871. He also mentioned "Happy Jack."—Connelley, "Life and Adventures of George W. Brown," p. 114. A second newspaper reported that "Mr. Snuffer, owner of a train from New Mexico, and four teamsters were frozen to death within ten miles of Hays City." It is almost certain, then, that "Snappie" and Snuffer are one and the same.—Kansas Daily Commonwealth, December 3, 1871; see also, Philip Henry Sheridan, Personal Memoirs of P. H. Sheridan (New York: Charles L. Webster, 1885), v. 2, pp. 310-311 for his account of the storm.

78. James Calvin Juvenal was head of a family prominent in the cattle business for 20 years following the Civil War. He led a herd from Williamson county, Texas, to Atchison, Kan., in 1870, arriving with the herd at Russell sometime after July 4. The herd, driven by J.C. (familiarly known as "Coll") Juvenal and brothers Ishiah and William (either of whom might have been known as "Dick"), remained in Russell county for winter grazing under the care of a fourth brother, Ben, and Joseph Welden, a cousin by marriage. William L. Urban, "The Juvenal Cattle Drive of 1870," Kansas Historical Quarterly, v. 39, no. 2 (Summer, 1973), pp. 209-205; Russell Advance, June 8, 1876.
been tangled long because he was still fat. He was a very beautiful black stallion & weighed about 1000 lbs. They took him to Wallace & sold him to Pete Roudb lid for $240. Pete never got him broken to work or ride but got him broken so he could breed mares to him.

The first that was heard of Alex Ramsy & his deputy Jim or Timm were chopping wood on the Walnut & Big Timber. Alex Ramsy was one of the first marshals of Hays & among the first sheriffs. When he was appointed sheriff he took his wood chopper friend ___ as his deputy.79

The Clarkson Bros were moving their buffalo camp up the [left blank] creek & Geo Clarkson & one of their men who was never known by anything but Kentuck80 were quite a ways behind. They saw some Indians a big mile away. Kentuck said Geo here is where I get me an Indian. Geo objected but Kentuck insisted & took a shot at the middle one of the three head ones. All at once they saw the Indian throw up his arms & fall off his pony. They did not wait to see what else happened but ran down over the hill & mounted their horses & rode like Hell for the wagons. Geo said that was such a long shot that the Indians did not hear the report so didn’t know where the shot came from.

Kentuck was bitten by a skunk & crawled into a little room under the RR water tank at Russell & died of [hydro]phobi[a].

Geo Clarkson was out trying to find the trail of the horse thief that killed Alex Ramsy & stopped at Matt Clarksons father-in-laws place, a man by the name of Davis & had a pair of handcuffs in his pocket & was fooling with the Davis girl that Matt afterwards married. He put the girls hands behind her back & snapped the handcuffs on her then found he had the wrong key. So then they had to get an old axe & hammer & cut them off.81

Geo Clarkson wore very long hair as has been said before & I asked him the reason. He said that eight or ten young fellows expected to become Indian scouts but when their hair got long they found that their chief scout was to be Buffalo Bill only one or two of them became scouts. Matt & Geo both say Buffalo Bill was not very well liked.

The Clarkson Bros used buffalo rifles that cost from $100 to $150 dollars a piece. Charlie & Matt used $156 guns with telescope sights on them & Geo said he did not use that kind because Charles & Matt always had a black eye from the big sight hitting them on the eye when those great big guns would kick them.

III. EPILOGUE

THOUGH we know from contemporary sources that thousands of men hunted buffalo in the Central Plains, original narratives are comparatively rare; few of these men remained long enough to grow with a community and bring to their memoirs a sustained perspective on the successive occupations of teamster, woodcutter, hunter, rancher, and farmer. The distinguishing feature of these manuscripts then, is the typicalness of the life portrayed, a life representative of the unchronicled who left only descendants to witness the change wrought in those few pioneering years. Matthew Clarkson has thus left for us not only a recollection of his experiences, but his reflections on them, written half a century after the buffalo and the open range had nearly vanished from western Kansas.

79. The story is continued and cited as footnote 81. Alexander Ramsey, sheriff of Ellis county, was killed north of Stockton on June 7, 1875, while pursuing horse thieves.—Rev. Blaine E. Buskey, Sheriff Ramsey Killed 100 Years Ago, June 7, Ellis County Historical Society Homesteader, v. 2, no. 1 (May, 1975), p. 4.

80. Homer W. Wheeler, former settler at Fort Wallace, wrote that "I knew one hunter whom we called ‘Kentuck,’ he presumably being a native of Kentucky. I never knew his real name and it was not considered polite, in those days, to ask a man what state he hailed from. ‘Kentuck’ in less than one year, made about ten thousand dollars hunting buffalo. He had a camp on Punished Woman’s Fork, a stream south of Wallace, where he killed three thousand seven hundred buffalo. It was known as the ‘slaughter pen.’ This killing was done when thousands of the animals were going north."—Homer W. Wheeler, Buffalo Days: Forty Years in the Old West: The Personal Narrative of a Cattleman, Indian Fighter and Army Officer (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill Co., 1923), p. 59.

81. A continuation of the story is cited as footnote 79.