The Story of a Kansas Freedman

Edited by Alberta Pantle

I. INTRODUCTION

This remarkable story of Larry Lapsley, a Negro slave who escaped from the South during the Civil War and became a pioneer settler of Saline county, came to the Historical Society through George Robb, state auditor. As a boy Mr. Robb lived near Lapsley's farm in a section settled largely by Swedish immigrants.

"I remember him well," Mr. Robb says. "He was a well set up and muscular man, six feet or better in height but slightly stooped, and he always walked with something of a shuffle. Because of the condition of his feet I never knew him to wear anything but overshoes or gum-boots and he rode horseback a great deal. He was a genial, kindly man who by the force of his character had won the esteem and respect of all his neighbors."

Lapsley lived the life of an ordinary early-day Kansas farmer and had little to say about his youthful experiences. He was over thirty years of age before he learned to read and write. According to Mr. Robb he was taught by Mrs. B. F. Robinson, the wife of his nearest neighbor, in the kitchen of her home. She held there what is considered the first school in Liberty township. Larry's favorite paper was the Police Gazette, to which he was a subscriber for many years. Mrs. Robinson protested that it was too vulgar for him to read but he always argued that it didn't hurt him and couldn't possibly hurt anyone else because it came in a wrapper and no one else could see the pictures.

Lapsey was a member of the neighborhood's first Sunday school which was held in a school building near the Robinson home. After it was moved to another location, however, he never went again. To those who chided him he always said that he didn't have the time to go but would start again "as soon as the busy season was over." That time never came. It is Mr. Robb's opinion that he attended

1. B. F. Robinson was born in Mt. Vernon, Maine, April 27, 1832. He came to Kansas in 1858, settling first in Junction City, a year later in Saline county. On October 7, 1861, he enlisted in the Sixth regiment Kansas Volunteer cavalry and served until November 19, 1864. After being mustered out Mr. Robinson returned to Mt. Vernon and was married there, March 22, 1865, to S. Adelaide Smith. The couple lived near Salina for five years and then moved to a farm two miles east and two miles south of present Ansaria, Saline county. He died in Salina, August 5, 1909, at the home of his daughter, Mrs. C. H. Harn---Salina Evening Journal, August 6, 1909; Report of the Adjutant General of the State of Kansas, 1861-68 (Topeka, 1890), p. 183.
the first Sunday school only out of respect for the Robinson family, to whom he was deeply attached.

It was in the Robinson home that Lapsley died December 13, 1897, at the age of 57. He had never married and he left all his property to the Robinsons. It consisted of an “unnumerable farm of 119 acres, worth about $3,600, some stock and other possessions.”

Two provisions of the will were characteristic. Lapsley asked to be buried “decently and respectably, but with no display or ostentation,” and he asked that his tombstone be “not an expensive one, the same being intended merely to mark my last resting place.” The requests were followed out in the Robinson family cemetery.

About twenty years after Lapsley settled in Kansas he told the story of his Civil War experiences to Lily Learned, a young relative of the Robinsons. She wrote it down verbatim without interrupting him to ask questions about dates, the spelling of proper names and without attempting to alter his diction or grammar. So far as it has been possible to check dates and locations, his memory appears to have been remarkably accurate. Except for the addition of some punctuation and other minor changes for the sake of clarity, the story follows as originally told.

II. LARRY LAPSLEY’S STORY

I was born in Danville, Kentucky, March 7, 1840. I was raised by Samuel Lapsley. He owned my mother and sister. My father died before I can remember. When I was a little baby I remember mother taking me and spreading a cloth for me to sit on out of doors under the cool shade of the locust trees with my boy cousins, older than I, to watch me. One day as I was playing my sister and cousins wandered off and left me alone at which not finding anything to do, I took to creeping around. There was a very large well in the yard that used to most always be covered up, but as it was not covered and I for the want of having better to do creeped to the edge of this well, and laying down, was looking into the water in which I saw my face and thought it was fine. My mother was in

2. Salina Daily Republican-Journal, December 14, 1897; Salina Herald, December 17, 1897; Salina Weekly Union, December 24, 1897, quoting the Topeka Daily Capital, December 22; Salina Sun, December 25, 1897.
3. Letter and transcript of will from Fred D. Joy, probate judge of Saline county (June, 1942); Salina Weekly Union, December 31, 1897.
4. Lily Learned was the daughter of James Learned, a brother-in-law of B. F. Robinson.
5. A branch of the Lapsley family migrated from Virginia to Kentucky in 1710. Samuel was the son of a Presbyterian minister, Joseph B. and Salie (Lapsley) Lapsley, his second wife. There were two children: Margaret, who married a Taylor and moved to Texas, and Samuel who married Mary Bronsow. His widow resided in Pleasant Hill, Mo., in 1861.—Neander M. Woods, The Woods-McAfee Memorial . . . (Louisville, 1906), pp. 129, 130.
the house doing her work and she happened to come to the door to see where I was. Seeing me at the well it scared her very much, but having presence of mind enough not to hollow, she slipped up and caught me and then hollowed. I can just remember how she scared me by catching hold of me so quick.

Samuel Lapsley's mother was a widow. She owned eight slaves. She was the mother of two children, a boy and a girl. The old lady always called me her boy as her two children were married and she kept me in her room from the time that I was born until her death, then willed me to her son Samuel. When she was dying she called me to her bedside and gave me to her son Samuel. Taking my hand in hers she told me to be a good boy and stay with Samuel. To Samuel she said, "Keep my boy as long as you live to remember me by." Then to her daughter she gave my sister. My old mother went to Samuel along with me. She gave half of her slaves to one and half to the other with a lot of money, for she was very rich. Judging from my size, I think I was about eight years of age at the time of her death. My sister died when she was about eighteen years old.

In a few years Samuel went through with the most of this property, all but me and my mother. He was a very fast young man and drove fast horses and by this he lost nearly all of his property. He moved to Missouri taking with him his all, myself and my mother and three of my cousins. When he landed at Independence he had only five dollars in cash. He was a Free Mason and he went to live with a man by the name of Horace Asbery, taking his slaves with him. Now this Horace Asbery was a Free Mason and was a rich farmer. Samuel lived with him one year, in which time he bought eighty acres of land in Jackson county near the Little Blue river ten miles from Independence. He took all his slaves and lived on his land three years, then sold his farm and moved down to Pleasant Hill, Cass county, and bought an interest in a livery stable in which I was always at work. While [I was] working in the livery stable my master run behind and one of my cousins was taken from him for a debt of $1,200. I went to live with his brother-in-law whose name was William Bunor, in the year 1859. In the meantime I knew what his mother had said about his keeping me as long as he lived. One day he said to me, "Larry, I want you to go over to my brother Will's for a few weeks and do some work for him as he wants you." Not thinking anything strange by this command, I

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6. The name evidently should be William Bronough. Samuel Lapsley married Mary Bronough and William Bunor is described as his brother-in-law. See Footnote 5.
readily obeyed but after four weeks had passed I came home, as I thought to my home, but found it was no more to be my home. I met some of the boys in the yard and they asked me how I liked my new home. I did not know what to say and at this they told me that I had been sold to his brother Will. I of course would not believe them. I went into the house and was shown into the room where my master and his wife were. He was reading the newspaper and she was sewing or something of the sort. I shook hands with them and then in a few minutes, I asked him if he had sold me and he looked up and said, “No, Larry, I don’t want to sell you,” and that was all the satisfaction I could get. I then told him that the boys had told me that I had been sold. At this he got up and put his hands in his pockets, took his hat and left the house, and then I knew too well that I had been sold. I worked on the farm for Will Bunker until the fall of ’sixty-one. At this time the Union army was coming into Missouri. The old slave holders got scared and run into Texas with their slaves, my master with the rest.7

My master started with us all on the 15th of December, 1861. I drove a four-horse team loaded with women and children, all of them were slaves. The women cried because they had to leave their old home. We were the balance of the winter getting to Texas. We had to travel slow and camp around for fear that the Union troops would capture us. We got to Bonum [Bonham], Texas,8 in February. We camped a mile south of Bonum while my master went around the country hunting a place to hire his slaves. He hired me to a man by the name of Stancel who owned a whiskey distillery. This man lived seven miles north of east of Bonum and fifteen miles south of the Red river. I worked there the greater part of two years. When I went to work in the still house, there was an old man that worked there, seventy-three years of age. He was head distiller. His name was Uncle Jerry. He, also, was a Negro and a slave. I worked under him for three months. He then died and at his death I became head distiller for Mr. Stancel. After I had worked for Mr. Stancel for two years there was a great excitement about Gen. Blunt’s army coming into Texas, at which Mr. Stancel and lots of others got scared and sold their plantations and run back into

7. Another reason for the removal of slaves from Missouri was the fear that they would escape or be stolen and taken into Kansas which had been admitted into the Union as a free state on January 29, 1861. In Cass county, which adjoined Kansas on the west, this danger would be especially great.—Hildegarde Rose Herklotz discusses this problem in her article, “Jayhawkers in Missouri, 1858-1865,” in The Missouri Historical Review, Columbia, v. XVII, No. 4 (July, 1923), pp. 609-613, and v. XVIII, No. 1 (October, 1923), pp. 64-101.
8. Bonham, Fannin county, Tex., is about eleven miles south of the Red river which forms the boundary between Texas and Oklahoma, then the Indian territory.
Texas. Mr. Stancel sold his distillery to a man by the name of Merit Brisko and also his plantation and hired me to this Brisko to run the distillery as he had no one that could run it. I stillled for Brisko one year. By this time old man Stancel came back and took possession of his plantation again. Brisko then moved and had the distillery moved away down into Red river bottom. I went with him and helped him put up the distillery and then came back to Mr. Stancel's. I left Brisko two weeks before my year was up. I stayed with Mr. Stancel the balance of this two weeks. Old man Stancel came to me one day and asked me if I was willing to stay with him another year. I told him I was. He said, "You will have to go see Kalas Kook because he has charge of all you boys." I asked him, "Where do Kalas Kook live?" "He lives southeast of here seven miles. You may have my horse and see him and tell him that you are willing to stay with me and that I am willing to pay him as much a year for you as anyone else would pay." In the meantime I will go back. Kalas Kook was a neighbor of this Bunor that owned me in Missouri. He started the year before us for Texas. He left part of his stock for Bunor to take care of. When Bunor came to Texas he hunted up Kalas Kook and gave him charge of all his slaves which he had hired out. Then Bunor went back to Missouri and enlisted in the Rebel army and got killed at Pea Ridge.

I thanked Mr. Stancel and took his horse and went to do my errand. Kalas Kook was at this time sick in bed. He said to me, "You have been at Old Stancel's long enough, by ——- You can't stay there any longer. I have hired you to Jones." "My boss said that I could stay with Mr. Stancel as long as I stayed in Texas." "It don't make a ——- bit of difference what your boss said. I'm your boss now. I have hired you to Jones and when your time is up at Stancel's I want you to go to Jones." "Look a here, Mr. Stancel says that he will give you as much a year as any man." "It don't make any difference what Stancel says. You have got to go to Jones. You recollect that I am your boss now. You have got to do as I want you to. Jones don't want you to do hard work. He wants

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9. According to Lapsley's calculation, this would have been during the latter part of 1863. On August 23, 1863, Maj. Gen. James G. Buntin, with orders to "obtain possession of all the Indian territory to the Red river," set out from Fort Gibson. He penetrated the Indian territory as far as Perryville in the Choctaw nation and then turned and went east into Arkansas. — The War of the Rebellion: a Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies, 1861-1865 (hereafter referred to as Official Records), Series I, v. XXII, Pt. I, pp. 597, 598.

10. The name probably should be spelled Briscoe. There was a man by that name living near Bonham in 1865.—T. M. Scott to Stand Watie, February 1, 1865, in Edward Everett Dale and Gaston Litton, Cherokee Documents . . . (Norman, Okla., 1909), p. 211.

11. The battle of Pea Ridge or Elkhorn, as it was known in the South, occurred in March, 1862.
you to be a wagon boss to make them keep things up right.” “Well, that is just what I don’t want to do.” “It don’t make any difference what you want to do. I have hired you to Jones and you must go there. He is going to start to Galveston in three weeks and he wants you to be there to be boss over the other Negroes to make them keep things up.” “Well, I must be getting back.” “Goodby, don’t forget to go to Jones when you time is up.” As I went to go his wife got up and followed me down to the gate and said, “Now, Larry, don’t pay any attention to what Mr. Kook says. He is cross to us all now. He talks worse to me than he has to you this morning.” At this we shook hands and parted. “Don’t forget to come and see us before you go to Jones!” I told her that I would not and that was the last time I ever saw her.

When I got home Mr. Stancel came out and said, “Well, Larry, how did you make it?” “Well, I did not make it at all. Kalas Kook is a fool, I believe.” “What did he say?” “I told him what you said and he said I had been at Old Stancel’s long enough and that he had hired me to Jones and that I was to go there when my time was up here.” “Did you tell him that I would give him as much as anyone else?” “Yes, I did.” “Well, I can’t help you then, Larry, if he won’t let you stay, because he has charge of all you boys, and I am sorry of that.” At this he walked into the house and I went on to the stable. There I met Tom, a cousin of mine. Tom before this, had been at me to start north and I had refused to go because it was very dangerous to go through the Indian Territory at that time because old Gen. Muculler [McCulloch] 12 the rebel general that was tenting at Bonum had made a treaty with the Indians that they should not let anyone through the Indian Territory, white or black, without a pass from him. He gave the Indians $100 a head for everyone they caught going north and the Indians were watching day and night to catch the Negroes and whites that dared venture. 13 I had told Tom of all this but he answered, “Well, now, Larry, I did not think you would be such a coward for there is some get through once in a while and we would stand as good a show as some of them that do get through.” “Why, Tom, you don’t know nothing about

12. Brig. Gen. Henry E. McCulloch was in command of the Northern Sub-district of Texas with headquarters at Bonham.—Official Records, Series I, v. XXVI, Pt. II. p. 188.

13. Considerable research has failed to verify this statement. Annie Heloise Abel makes no mention of it in her carefully documented volume, “Slaveholding Indians,” although she does say that the Choctaws and Chickasaws, allies of the South, were extremely hostile towards the blacks during the latter part of the war. General McCulloch experienced much difficulty with deserters so it is possible that he made some sort of agreement with the Choctaws for the return of his men captured in their territory. It is not likely that he offered them $100 a head. The North, which was considerably more affluent than the South, paid bounties ranging from $5 to $30 for the return of deserters.—Annie Heloise Abel, The American Indian Under Reconstruction (Cleveland, 1935), p. 272; Ella Lonn, Desertion During the Civil War (New York, 1929), pp. 221, 223.
this. There were eighty-odd white men started through all of them well armed and got way down to Boggy Depot on their road to Fort Smith and then the Indians run onto them one morning and killed a whole lot of them and even captured the captain of the band, and out of all the eighty only twenty-eight got through to Fort Smith. The Indians brought all the rest back that they did not kill, and turned them over to Gen. Mueuller and the home guards there and received their $100 a head.” “Well, I don’t know anything about that, Larry. I would rather die than stay here in Texas. We would stand as much chance as some that do get through.”

As I rode up to the stable, I says to Tom, says I, “Tom, I am all ready now to go north, if you want to.” “What got you in the notion all at once?” “I have been over to see Kalas Kook. When Bunor left here he left us in care of Kalas Kook. He never said anything about that to me. He told me when he left me at Old man Stancel’s that I could stay with him until the war was over, or as long as I stayed in Texas. He then went and put us in the hands of Kalas Kook, one of the meanest men there ever was in Missouri. He has hired you and me to Jones and says when our time is out here we must go over to Jones because Jones is going to start south in about three weeks and I tell you, Tom, I am going to die before I go.”

“Hurrah for you, Larry. I am glad to hear you talk that way. I’m with you. When will we start?” “Our time is out in two weeks and if we are going to go then will be our chance.” “Well, I tell you, Larry, I’m glad that Kalas Kook has stirred you up and whenever you say start, I’m ready.” “Now, Tom, I tell you what we have got to do. We have got to try to lay up some provisions to travel on. We have got two weeks now to gather it up in. So when our time is out, instead of going south we will go north. But, Tom, we want to talk about this a little. There is no use for us to start unless we are determined to go through or die. Now the first thing that we have got to make up our minds to is this: That we will travel only in the night and not in any roads because you know that the Indians are as thick as bees over there and Old Price’s army—which’s left of it—are all along Red river and maybe we

14. Boggy Depot, Chieksaw nation, was used during the Civil War as a supply station for the Confederate army in that region. Site of the town is in present Atoka county, Oklahoma.

can't get through anyway." "Yes, Larry, that would be the best thing for us to do and I am going to work saving up something for us to eat as fast as ever I can." "Tom, I am going to show Kalas Kook that I am not going to do as he says. I would a great deal rather die in the Indian Territory than do what he wants me to do." "Hurrah for you, Larry. I feel just that way myself and if you had listened to me we would have been in the Union army long ago." "We had better stop talking because someone might hear us."

Our two weeks passed off and Old man Stancel came out and said, "Now, your time is out and just as soon as you get ready you go over to Jones just as Kalas Kook said. Larry, I hate awful bad to give you up but if Mr. Kook won't let you stay we can't help it." "Yes, sir, Mr. Stancel, I am sorry that Kalas Kook is a fool myself. I always knew that he was the meanest man in Missouri anyhow, and I don't know what my master left us in his hands for. He never told me that he was going to do that when he left here. If he had I would have talked against that you bet." "Yes, it is a bad thing but we can't help it." "Well, it is about time that we were starting." "Here," Mrs. Stancel said, "Larry, I am sorry that you can't stay with us, and if you ever get back from the south I want you to come and see us." "Yes, mam, I will do it." Then we said goodbye and started out, not south as they think, but north. We traveled and got to the Red river that night but not in time to cross before day and so we had to lay in Red river bottom all day. We could hear the Indians and Price's men yelling up and down the river but we kept very quiet until night. Then we built us a raft and rafted across the river into the Indian Territory.16

We traveled on that night into the Territory. Tom was very brave before we left Old man Stancel's. After we got into the Indian Territory his courage failed him. He had always been a great talker. After we got into danger he kept lagging behind, sometimes as much as a hundred yards, and he being way behind me I would say, "Here, Tom, what are you doing way back there? Come with me." "Oh yes, I am coming," he would say and run up beside me, but in a

16. The territory at this point was part of the Choctaw country. The Choctaws had concluded a treaty with the Confederate States on July 12, 1861. Slaveholders themselves, they were more in sympathy and remained more loyal to the South than any tribes of the territory who had made similar treaties. In the latter years of the war the Choctaw nation became the home of thousands of secessionist refugees from the more northerly tribes who had largely reverted to the Union cause. With the exception of occasional raids by the Union troops, the nation was controlled throughout the war by the Confederate army who were dependent, for the most part, upon this region for supplies of grain and beef for the Trans-Mississippi Department.—Statutes at Large of the Provisional Government of the Confederate States of America (Richmond, 1864), pp. 311-331; Abel, op. cit., p. 11: Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, 1865 (Washington, 1865), pp. 252-260; Official Records, Series I, v. XXXIV, Pt. II, p. 866.
SOME OF THE PLACES MENTIONED BY LARRY LAPSLEY IN THE STORY OF HIS ESCAPE FROM TEXAS TO FORT GIBSON
few minutes he would be way behind again. We traveled on until
daybreak then concealed ourselves. We found that we were only
about a hundred yards from some old Indian shanties, and there
we laid the rest of the day. We could hear dogs barking all around
us and making a great noise. The next night we started out again
and I suppose that we had gone about two miles that night when
a terrible big cloud came over in the west and darkened everything
so we had to stop traveling. It commenced raining and rained all
night. It was so very dark that all Tom and I could do was to
stand up beside trees. It was so dark that we could not see each
other two feet apart. As it began to get light we commenced to
hunt for a place to hide that day. We found what we thought
would be a good place but, when it cleared off, we found ourselves
right in the heart of a big Indian village. The dogs were barking
and the chickens were crowing, and we were very uneasy all day
and was very glad when night came that time. As soon as it got
dark enough for us to make a move we struck out again but it
commenced clouding up again before sunset. Just as we got to
traveling nicely this heavy cloud had got over again and made it
so dark in that big timber that we could not see and it went to
raining again and continued raining all night. We found ourselves
surrounded by Indians again the next morning. We hid ourselves
the best that we could and so we laid up that day in misery, longing
to see another night. As soon as it got dark enough we tried to
travel again but fate followed us and it clouded up again, and went
to raining. Tom began getting very much out of patience.

Now, of course, the next morning we were not very far from
the place we had stayed the day before. We were both wringing
wet and had been for three days. It seemed that during those
three days that it would clear up every day and cloud up and rain
every night. Tom said, "Look here, Larry, we shall never get
through this way. Why, just think, we have been here three days
and we are not more than three miles from the river and everything
that we have got to eat is soaking wet." "Well, well, Tom, we can't
help that. It ain't going to do for us to travel in the day time."
"Well, as long as it keeps clouding up this way we can't travel in the
night either and if we keep laying around this way we will get caught
anyhow." "Tom, you know what our agreement was before we left
Texas, that we would do no traveling in the day time and travel in
no roads but keep in all the woods that we could." "Yes, I know
that was our agreement but don't you see that it keeps raining every
night and that we can’t travel.” “Well, what are we going to do about it?” “We can try and travel a little every morning when it is early.”

“Tom, I don’t think that will do at all. Whenever we attempt that I think we will be captured.” “If we keep staying here we shall be captured anyhow. I think it would be a good plan to travel a little in the morning but it is just as you say about it.” “But I don’t like it at all.” And so we started off.

It was daylight and we traveled about half a mile through the big heavy timber. It was very foggy but after a while it cleared off, and in passing along there was a great big fellow stepped out from behind an old oak tree. He said, “Good morning, gentlemen. Are you traveling?” Tom, said, “Yes, sir.” Tom stopped and talked with him. I got about two hundred yards ahead of Tom while he was talking with that fellow. By this time it had cleared off and the sun was shining bright. I looked to my right and I was within a hundred yards of an old Indian shanty. Tom then stopped talking and run and caught me. I said, “Tom, what do you think of that fellow?” “Oh, he is all right.” “What! Do you think that he is all right?” “Yes, he is all right. There is a lot of them going to start out next Saturday night and besides that he says that we are on the right road.” “Well, I tell you, Tom, that I don’t like the looks of that fellow at all.”

And so we traveled on until we got down to a creek where there was a little brush and a few scattering trees. I sat down on an old stump and Tom got down on his knees beside me and commenced telling me what this fellow had said to him. While we were talking there were two Newfoundland dogs came running right in between us and stopped right in front of us. I turned around and saw to my sorrow that we were surrounded by Indians.

The Indian captain rode up in front of us and cried, “Whope there, boys. We’ve got you.” Tom hollowed out, “Yes, sir.” “You boys going to give up? If you are, lay down your arms and march out this way.” And he waved his hand to signal the way we should go. Tom unbuttoned his belt and threw down his pistol, knife and all and started off. By the way, we both had on U. S. belts. After he had got ahead five or six steps I started after him. I had my pistol and knife on me. I did not throw them down and by this they thought I had none. I had on a very long frock-tailed coat which covered them up. They marched us up to the house that we had just passed and while we were marching along I got it into my head that
I might in some way save my pistol. Tom and I were marching side by side and the Indians following us and talking as fast as they could in their own tongue. I thought that I might have a chance to get away from them yet and I had a very fine revolver. In case that I did get away, I wanted to save it so I thought that I would try to slip it out of my belt and drop it in the grass there, so if I got away I could come right there and find it. I took hold of it and had just got it out of my belt and there was an old Chaktau [Choctaw] right behind me. I heard him say in a gruff voice, "Take your hands out of your bosom." I looked behind me and he had his old rifle leveled at my head. I dropped my pistol and walked on but they saw it fall and one of them got down from his horse and picked it up and it created a terrible jabbering among them. They marched us up to the house and gave us something to eat, such as they had: a little corn bread, sour milk and beef. After we had eaten they commenced searching us and put chains on us. They got some old Mexican silver dollars from me and from Tom they got some Confederate scrip. After searching us they marched us into the house and guarded us day and night. For about a week they kept us chained together and kept our hands chained so we could scarcely use them to eat. They would take turns watching us. They kept us in a room with a little turning and the door locked. One would set half of the night and then the other would come. If there ever was a time that I wanted to die, then was the time. The Indians would pour in to see us and have their big dances. For about two weeks I was sullen and saucy to the Indians.

One night when they were having a big dance and lots of stray Indians were there, it seemed as if half of them were drunk. They had got whiskey somewhere. There was one of them got to jumping around and run to Tom and said, "You, d—— you, trying to get to the Yankees." Tom just looked at him and smiled and did not say anything and so the Indian came over to me and said, "You tried to get to the Yankees, too." I jumped up from my seat and said, "You are a liar, sir." At which the Indian jumped back from me and the guard jumped and grabbed his gun and said, "Hold on, hold on!" and raised his gun on me. I looked at him and hollowed out to him to shoot and not stand there and talk about what he was going to do. "Shoot." He put his gun down and said, "Oh! I know how you feel but the easier you can be the better it will be for you. Yes, I know how you feel because I have been there myself." He then came and sat down beside me and commenced telling
what a time he had when he was captured by the Yankees. I was in hopes when he raised his gun that he would shoot me but he surprised me. I had become crazy mad and death would have been acceptable. They kept us chained together for nearly two weeks and after that they took the chains off of our hands and let us have separate chains on our legs in the day time but at night they would chain us together again with a big log chain, one end of it chained to one of Tom’s legs and the other chained to one of my legs. This would be done every night at bed time and then we would carry our separate chains in the day time. They would guard us around all day. One day about a week after I had been taken prisoner this black fellow that had betrayed us came into the room where we were sitting and said, “Good morning, gentlemen. I expect that you men think that I told on you, but I didn’t. The children told on you. They saw you passing by and went and told. I didn’t do it.” And so he went on talking with Tom. I never spoke to him. I felt more like killing him than talking with him. He talked and laughed with Tom for awhile then he went out and then the Indians came in. There were no Indians in the room while he was there. They were using him for a spy. After his visit we could see him running around but he did not come in to see us very often. I have seen the Indians running around outside striking this spy over the head with their revolvers and he telling them in the Indian language to quit striking him, and I used to wish that they would shoot him.

One day they sent this spy whose name was Moses into the forest to get a load of rails and they sent me with him. I was willing to go with him because I was tired sitting around in the house. When we got down into the woods he commenced a great conversation about the Indians. He kept telling their nature or rather he claimed to be. He said to me, “Look a here, man, if you all want to get away from here why if you just start out east over here, why there is a terrible big forest and there is no man that can ride through it. And if ever you could get in there you would be safe. The Indians would never follow you in there.” I said that I had run off enough. I wished that I hadn’t started away from home, that my object was to get back to Missouri. I left Texas because I did not like it and I wanted to get back home. He said, “If you boys want to get away you just want to go out that way.” I said, “No, I like this country and I believe that I will stay here. It puts me in mind of Missouri.” He said, “This is a pretty country, sure.” And of course I agreed with him and he talked on, but I said no more. We went back to

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the house with the rails and I was satisfied that he had not got any information from me about anything.

The Indians mostly lived on corn bread. They had little steel mills fastened up to trees where they ground their corn for each meal. After we were given separate chains we were put to work grinding their corn in these little mills. One day Tom and I were grinding there. I said, "Look a here, Tom, we have started and I haven't given up yet. If we can get the least chance let us start off again." Tom said, "Larry, don't you know that we can't get away from these Indians?" "I tell you, Tom, if I ever get the least chance, I am going." Tom said, "If you ever make a move from here I believe that they will bring you back. Don't you see that they have those Newfoundland dogs here yet and that old dog looks as if he knew about as much as a man." "Yes, I know that, but if I ever get a chance, I'm going." "Well, if you think that you can, get away and go, but I believe that those Indians will bring you back." So Tom and I stopped talking.

I was satisfied that Tom was whipped and that he would never try to get away, and so I made no more talk with him on that subject. I was determined that the first chance, however small, I would try to get away and as I have said, I was very stubborn and mulish with those Indians. Tom got so he would laugh and talk with them and by being so he got more privileges than I did. He could remove the chains from his legs and run foot races with the Indians and slip them on again. On the other hand, mine were so tight that they made my legs sore. I saw that Tom had so much more liberty than I did that I commenced getting uneasy, thinking that he might get away before I did and I knew that if he did get away that I never could. I resolved to change my action and act friendly with the Indians. I commenced talking and laughing with them although it was nothing but a forced laugh. I saw that it was having considerable effect and that gave me courage and so I pitched into talking in earnest. The Indians commenced getting very much attached to me. Before this they would watch and follow me every time that I stepped out of doors, with their guns ready. After I got to talking they would let me go out of doors without following me and that was a great relief to me.

I commenced to study how I could get my chains loose. There was a lot of Indian hatchets laying around in the yard. The Indians got so that they would allow me to go down into the woods a hundred yards from the house without following me with their guns. They
might come to the gate, but after a little they got so that they did not come out of the house so I took advantage of this and got one of those old hatchets. When I went out into the woods one time I took it with me and laid it by a big oak tree and hurried back and went into the house and commenced laughing and talking to the Indians. Tom nor the Indians had no idea what I had done. I felt more like laughing at the moment than I had since I had been in prison. Although I had my chains on I felt as though I was free and from that hour I commenced watching my chance to get away.

Time went on and I kept talking and gaining the confidence of the Indians as much as possible. There was a great deal of rain at that time. After I had been there nearly four weeks the Indians were having a big dance and that night there came up a terrible big rain storm. The thunder and lightning is terrific in those mountain countries. The Indians were having a big time in the house. Tom seemed to be enjoying it very much with his chains on but they did not any of them know what was in my head. The Indian that was guarding that night was a Cherokee. His name was Niel Bean. He was setting back clapping his hands and laughing and the Indians were talking in their own tongue when I jumped right up in the excitement and I ran over to this guard and said, "Look a here, I want to step out awhile. It is raining awful, but I want to go." He said, "Well, go ahead but hurry back."

He went on with his talking and I stepped out into the rain and hurried off down to my tree where I had left my hatchet. It was very dark but I found my tree and hatchet where I had laid it. There was a lapring inside of the lock where it went around my leg. I caught up my hatchet and opened that lapring and took the chain off from me and threw it, lock and all, as far as I could. When I started this time it was pouring down and the lightning was cracking around through the mountains and it looked like the whole mountain was covered with water. I ran as fast as I could through the brush and I had got about four miles east the way this black fellow had told me to go and instead of striking that great timber that he had told me about I struck a big prairie and before I got there the clouds had broke away and the moon shone bright. When I stepped out of the timber I could look all east of me and I could see nothing but prairie as far as I could see and that was that great forest that black fellow told me about. When I came out I could see no timber ahead of me. I started out into the prairie in a southeasterly direction. When I had gone about two hundred yards
from the timber I heard horses' feet striking the stones a little south of me. I supposed there was a road over there and somebody traveling along the road and so I laid down and tried to catch a glimpse of who it was but I could not see anyone. I got up and changed my course and started in a northeast direction. I was on a big hill. I went down this hill to the head of a little creek. After I had got about half of a mile from the place where I had laid down I looked back on the big hill and I saw the Indians coming over the hill on horseback and I made up my mind that I was a goner. Here I was out on this great prairie and there wasn't a tree standing here, and not enough timber to amount to anything. I knew that it was no use to run because I had nowhere to run to. There was a little patch of hazel brush a little ahead of me. I suppose that there was about an acre of it. I went into this. I went to the south side of it. By this time the Indian and his dogs were about two hundred yards behind me and so I just laid down in the edge of this patch of brush. When the dogs got in about a hundred yards of me they left my tracks and went down into the center of this patch of brush but the Indian kept a straight course and stopped his horse right by my side. By this time the dogs were making the brush crack just behind me and this Indian was setting on his horse so close to me that I was afraid he would step on me. He was looking over into the brush with his gun across his knee. All at once he hollowed, "Oh yes, Larry, come out." The dogs were working to the east side of the patch so the Indian struck out expecting to see me run out on that side and the dogs came out and took a long circle southeast of me, the Indian following them. When they got about two hundred yards from me I crept down the bank of the creek and waded down the creek until I got to the mouth where it emptied into a little river. I crossed that river that night and traveled on down the north side the balance of that night. Day caught me way down the river, I don't know how far, but at not a very good place to conceal myself. I got to a patch of sumac brush and thought I would hide myself there that day but my mind bothered me so that I could not stay there so I jumped up and went back up the river about a quarter of a mile where the banks were very high and steep and got under the bank. I was setting there about the time the sun rose. I remember that it was a bright, clear morning and I was thinking what a close call I had had the night before. I was wringing wet and had been so all night and while I was thinking about it I heard a stick break up on the bank behind me and so I turned my head
and there that Indian was on his horse, the same that I had seen
the night before. The dogs had passed and I did not hear them.
He was looking ahead at the dogs which had gone down to the
sumac patch. As soon as he had got far enough away so that I
dared to move I got down into the water and traveled up the river
about a hundred yards.

When I got up the river apiece I come to some willow bushes that
grew over the water and I got down under those bushes in the water.
In a few minutes I was surrounded by Indians on both sides of the
river. I could see them walking and riding up the river, looking
into the drifts. The bank of the river, where I was, was nearly
straight up and down and about twenty feet high. I could hear the
horses' feet on the high bank and the Indians driving on their dogs.
On the other side I could see them running around bareheaded with
their guns, looking in the brush piles after me and once in awhile
looking across the river at the Indians in front of me. I happened
to look up the river and there was the same old Indian that I had
seen the night before standing about a hundred feet from me looking,
as I thought, straight at me. I felt sure that he saw me. He was so
close that I could tell that he had my revolver in his belt. I fell
back with my head against the bank up to my neck in water ex-
pecting to hear him hollow, but, as good luck would have it, he un-
doubtedly did not see me as he made no noise. I was very careful
not to raise my head from under those bushes that day. All day I
could see the squaws riding with the rest, hunting for me, and so I
laid there all that night and next morning I saw that the Indians
were around there, if anything, a little thicker than the day before.
I saw them riding and driving their dogs until about three o'clock.
I stuck to my hiding place until about twelve o'clock the second
night when I heard a lot of big gray wolves howling around and I
took it for granted that there were not any Indians close so I ven-
tured to come out on the opposite side of the river.

I traveled down the river about a mile then crossed the river and
struck out for the mountains north. I got to the mountains just as
day was breaking and went to hunting me a hiding place. I found
a place that I thought would do for I had made up my mind that I
would not try to travel in day time again. I was about as uneasy
in the mountains as I had been the day before in the water because
I was right close to a lot more Indians. The dogs were a barking
about a hundred yards from me and I was afraid they would get
onto my track and run onto me again. I made out to stay there
that day but I was very glad when night came once more and as soon as it got dark enough for me to travel I struck out again and got to Pine mountains about midnight and traveled a little ways into the mountains. This made four days that I had not had anything to eat. When I went into the water the first day I had about two hands-full of corn in my pocket and I laid in the water until the corn sprouted. I put my hand into my pocket to get some of it and there was sprouts on it half an inch long.

The night that I got to Pine mountains the moon was shining bright and the mountains did look very pretty. I stopped and sat on an old log to rest a little. While I was sitting there I heard a terrible noise ahead of me and in a minute out came a big deer and after it came a big black wolf. When the deer got to me it changed its course and went to the north but the wolf kept coming right toward me. I sat there and looked at him until he had got within a few yards of me and then I raised up and threw a stone at him and hollowed. When I threw the stone at him he just raised up and stood on his hind feet. The moon was shining bright and he just glistened and looked like a black pony. I went to laughing and he got down and went running back as fast as he could. I sat there a little while and then I started on again.

I reached the highest part of Pine mountains that night. I found out that I had got away from the Indian settlement from the sound of the chickens crowing, which seemed a good ways off. I made up my mind that when I saw so many wild animals running around so thick that there could not be many Indians near. So I struck out to travel in the day time again. Before this I had not traveled any in the day time but had laid by until night. My object was to keep in all the heavy timber that I could and to keep out of all roads. I went down into the bottom that day between the Pine and Oak mountains. I had got into some heavy timber and struck a due north course. Before I had been traveling northeast. This timber was very thick and the first thing that I knew I came to a road. I heard Indians talking and when I pecked out I saw some Indian soldiers. This was on the Fort Smith and Boggy Depot road.\footnote{17} If I had been two or three minutes sooner I would have been caught again for I would have run right into their arms. I dived my head in until I thought that they were far enough past for me to come out then I run across the road and struck out as fast as I could for the Oak mountains north, which was about a mile from there.

\footnote{17} The Fort Smith and Boggy Depot road was used extensively by the Confederate army in carrying supplies to Boggy Depot where they maintained reserves for the troops in the Indian territory.
The Oak mountains were higher than the Pine mountains and it was hard work for me to climb on account of the stone which was very large. As I was going up the mountain I heard something rattle the leaves and when I looked I saw that it was a centipede. It was about sixteen or eighteen inches long. It was brown and had a hard shell. It had two rows of legs with sharp claws. I had my stick on him and it coiled up onto it and the way it made the splinters fly was a sight. I held it with my stick until I mashed its head with a stone. I went on up the mountain until I reached the top. I got upon a large stone and could look back the way I had come. I saw a lot of cattle between the two mountains with the Indians herding them. While I was there I thought that I would take off my coat and dry it, and try and get rested as I thought that I was safe. I examined my corn that was in my pocket. By this time I commenced to be very hungry. I took the corn out of my pocket and it had all grown together and the sprouts were about three inches long. I thought that I would lie down and rest but I could not do it. While I was sitting there, there was a big drove of wild turkeys came up and I looked at them pretty wistfully, but I could not ketch one for my strength was almost gone not having anything to eat for five days except a little of this sprouted corn, and besides I had not had any sleep since I started out, but I jumped up and put on my coat and started out north over the mountain. I traveled on, the most of that day, in the mountains. I thought that I would travel day and night now.

That day I got out of that tier of mountains and crossed to another tier. That night following I got very sleepy. As I was going over the mountain there was a large ledge of stone and a little after sundown there was a very large catamount jumped out from behind a pile of stone. The mountain was very steep where he jumped out. As he came out he jumped on a large round stone and set it to rolling down the hill after him, and though I was very hungry and faint I just laid down and rolled and laughed to see that catamount and stone rolling down the hill. The catamount probably thought it was I coming after him. But it was fun, I can tell you. I went on. In about three hours after that there came up a very dark cloud. It got so dark up in the mountains that I could not see to travel. I came to a place where the leaves were piled up very thick and I thought that I would lie down there and rest. When I lay down on the leaves I felt something moving under me and I got up quick too, I can tell you. I have an idea that it was either
young wolves or young bears. I started on again but had not gone a great ways until it commenced thundering and lightning and rain-
ing, and heavy thunder it was too, I tell you, and the water just poured down in a sheet, and the lightning struck all around there. I stood up by a tree. It rained for about two hours. After it ceased I started down the mountain. Of course I was wringing wet and had been since I had left prison.

I got out of the mountains into a valley a little before day, and I got so terrible sleepy that I thought I could not go any farther with-
out sleeping. The mosquitoes were very thick there. I concluded that I would lay down and cover my head with bushes so that I could sleep a while. So I went to work and broke a lot of bushes and covered my head. I laid down by a tree. My object was to keep the mosquitoes off while I was sleeping. I got my head covered up and got to dozing off a little when I heard some leaves rattling not far from me. It sounded like someone walking. This noise kept getting closer to me all the time so I threw the bushes off my head and behold it was a big wolf. He had got within a few rods of me and was looking at me. If I had raised up probably he would have jumped on me, but I hollowed at him. He just trottled around me but did not appear to be any ways excited. I got up and went to traveling again because I saw that it would not do for me to lay there. Not long after this day commenced to break.

That day about three o'clock when I was traveling through the woods I run on to another Indian shanty. I came within a hundred yards and looked and I saw an old Indian sitting on the fence with his back to me. He seemed to be looking into the house so I struck out north because I was afraid that he would turn around and see me. I traveled on the balance of the day and the next day I crossed the Canadian river. I was walking with a stick when I crossed the river. It was near waist deep and stony bottom. While I was crossing a terrible fish came tumbling over the stones, nearly as big as I was. After I got across the river I could not travel more than a quarter of a mile without sitting down and resting. I kept on that way until I got to Norfork [North Fork Town]. The day that I got to Norfork I found a lot of wild hogs and cattle. There was not anyone there or anyone within fifty miles. It was at that

18. North Fork, commonly called North Fork Town, was in the Creek nation. It was located on the North Fork of the Canadian river near its juncture with the Canadian. The present town of Eufaula, Okla., is near the site of the old Indian village.
19. During the latter years of the war the Canadian river bottoms became a refuge for wild animals. This was due to the abandonment of livestock by the Indians who had been forced to leave their homes and to the absence of hunters in this section.—John N. Edwards, *Shelby and His Men* . . . (Cincinnati, 1867), pp. 463, 464.
time a deserted Indian village. There were even wild dogs there. I hunted up my quarters. The winter before the Union soldiers had their quarters there so I was lost. I did not know where I was. There was a large building there and I took that for my quarters. This building was the largest house that was in the town. The floor was covered with paper. I expected to die there because I did not know where I was. I laid around on the paper and would sometimes walk out a little piece. I was getting very weak then. I could not walk more than ten steps without resting.

Every night the large wolves would come into town and run all the other creatures out. When they would come they would sound just like a brass band. I was completely lost for my aim had been, when I left Texas, to go to Fort Smith. I had been at Fort Smith before but being captured by the Indians had got me lost.

After I had been there two days I commenced thinking that I might ketch one of those wild hogs for they had got to coming into the houses to sleep to protect themselves from the wolves. I picked out a house to ketch one in. This house had been a smoke house. I went there and fixed a door so that I could fasten in my hog, if I got it. I went there morning after morning but there was nothing there. I was very near starved. Had not had anything to eat yet. One morning when I had nearly given up I thought that I would go and look anyhow, and when I got there, there was a big hog in the house. I fastened him up as quick as I could. I did not know how I was going to kill him and that was the next thing to study over. There was some large cannon balls laying around there. When I got that hog fastened up he was very courageous and so I was in a study how to kill him. I looked like a poor object to try to kill him because I was almost a skeleton. I got a couple of those ten pound cannon balls and thought that maybe I could knock him down standing outside of the door. I threw one of them and hit his nose and made it bleed and also made him mad. So I threw again and it was like the first. It made him still [more] furious. I saw that I could not do anything with him that way so I thought of some other way to kill him. I got inside of the house where the hog was.

There was a box bed where some of the soldiers had slept and this house had also been used for a smoke house. When I got in, I got up on this box bed, and up over head there was a lot of sticks that had

20. There are records of Union soldiers having passed through North Fork Town but it is doubtful whether they maintained headquarters there for any appreciable length of time. There was never, at any time during the war, a sufficient force stationed at Fort Gibson, held by the Union army, to sustain prolonged advances into the territory south of the Arkansas river.
been used to hang the meat on. I thought that I would take one of these and knock him down. While I stood on the bed the hog got back as far as he could so I made up my mind that I must kill him and not let him get away. I took my stick and got down off the bed. I went walking up toward the hog with the stick in my hand. I struck him across the nose and he threw up his head and went for me. There was a center post in the room and I backed behind that. When the hog came, instead of hitting me, he hit the post. When he struck the post he wheeled around and run under the bed and I followed him up and fastened him in with a board. When he got under the bed it was so narrow that he could not turn around. I thought, at this, that I had done a big thing. I then sat down to rest before I could kill him. While I was there I found an old axe that had been used for a meat axe and also the half of a case knife. I took this old axe and knocked off a couple of boards from the top of the bed so I could get at the hog. He was wedged in there so close that all I had to do was to hammer him in the head until he was dead. After I killed him the next thing was how I could get him out of there. Before I attempted to get him out, of course, I must have a fire.

In this house where I was staying General Blunt had had his headquarters. 21 As I have said there was lots of paper there. I went to hunting for some matches and I found three so I went to strike up a fire. I tried two matches and neither of them would burn but the last match struck fire and so I built up a fire. With the case knife I stripped off a piece of the hog's skin from his ham and cut off a piece of meat about as large as the palm of my hand. I drove up a couple of sticks and hung up a little piece of meat over the fire. I took one bite, for you may be sure I was too near starved to wait until it was done. Taking one bite nearly killed me for it felt like a rock in my stomach. It was three hours before I could take another bite. I worked until I got my hog skinned and cut up and out from under the bed and barbecued, as the Indians call it. I cut it up, the hams and shoulders, and barbecued or cooked it by means of hanging it up over the fire on my two poles. I then took it to the house I was staying in and left the rest for the wolves to eat.

The house that I had took for my quarters was a very large well-finished house with cupboards and pantries. It was a story and a half high and had been a very fine house. I expected to die there.

I made a bed of paper and every night I had plenty of music because the wolves were so very thick. I expected to live on the hog that I had killed as long as I could. I was so weak and low that I could only eat a little at a time and it would be two or three hours before I could eat any more. Every day I could eat a little more and the third day after I had killed the hog, early in the morning, I heard a hog squealing out south of the house. I jumped up as fast as I could and went to see what was the matter. When I got where I could see, I saw that it was a lot of wolves killing a hog. By the time I got there they had him dead and all his innards out. I drove the wolves away. The young ones run as fast as they could but the old ones were very stubborn about giving up their hog. They backed off very slow and sat within a few yards while I was taking some of the meat. I cut off one ham and carried it back to the house. As I left the hog the wolves came up to get what was left.

After I commenced to eat I became weaker. I got so weak the third day after I got something to eat that if I was lying down I could scarcely get up. I continued getting weaker for four days and then I commenced to gain a little. After I had gained strength I commenced trying to walk out a little. In the beginning I could not walk more than twenty yards until I had to set down and rest a good deal longer than it took me to get there and then I would get up and go back to the house.

While I was in Norfolk there was a very fine greyhound that got very gentle to me and would lay at the door of the house where I stayed. There were a lot of dogs there but they were all very wild but this one. I used to feed him some of my meat once in awhile. I was in Norfolk twelve days before I got strong enough to leave. There was a very nice spring in town. I used to take my stick and walk out there and get a nice cool drink of water. After I got strong enough to think of moving on I walked out a quarter of a mile and turned and came back without resting. I concluded to start the next day. I took off a pair of drawers and took them down to the spring and washed and dried them. I tied the legs of the drawers together and put in each leg some of the meat I had barbecued. The next day when I started I saw a dim old road leading north. It was where the army had been traveling.\(^2\) I did

\(^2\) This was probably the Texas road. It extended south from Fort Gibson, crossed the Canadian river near North Fork Town, then proceeded south and west to Perryville and Boggy Depot. It was a busy thoroughfare during the 1840's when emigration to Texas was at its height and was used for the transportation of troops during the Civil War.—Grant Foreman, "Early Trails Through Oklahoma," *Chronicles of Oklahoma*, Oklahoma City, v. III, No. 2 (June, 1920), p. 117.
not know where I was but I wanted to go north so I started. With
the meat flung over my shoulder and my stick in my hand I started
out on this road. I tried to get that dog to follow me but he would
not leave town. I traveled about twenty-five miles that day. About
dark I happened to get to an old log house on the prairie and I
stayed there all night. Next morning I got up and struck out on
this old road. I traveled all the next day and about sundown I
looked ahead of me and saw some heavy timber so I hurried up as
fast as I could, very curious to see what it was. I got there about
dark and right in the edge of this timber was a large house. It
looked like there had been a battle there because the house was all
shot to pieces. I stayed in that house all night. Way in the night
I heard bells ringing and chickens crowing and I was wondering all
night where I could be. Next morning I made up my mind that I
would find out. I did not know whether I was out of danger or not
but I knew if I wasn’t I never would be, so started out down the
timber.

When I got about a quarter of a mile I came to a big river. All
up and down the river were Indians, fishing, hunting and running
around. When I got within about two hundred yards of the river
I saw an Indian woman running a skiff across the river to the side
I was on. She got to the bank long before I did and got out. I
made right for the boat. She saw that I was going for the boat and
turned and jumped into it again. I got there just as she got into the
boat. I asked her to let me ride with her but I soon saw that she
could not understand. She was a Creek Indian woman. I made
motions to her and she beckoned for me to get in. She rowed across
right at the mouth of the Grand river where it emptied into the
Arkansas. On the other side there was a lot of Indians with guns
and pistols. She rowed right up among them. I got out of the boat
and shook hands with the Indians. I told one of them that I wanted
some breakfast and I found out that he could not talk English
either. I then made signs to him and he motioned to me to follow
him and so I went with him up into the woods a piece and I got into
a big Indian town. I found out that I was in the Union lines. The
Indian took me to a little shanty and he told them that I wanted
some breakfast. The old lady and two girls went to getting my
breakfast. They wanted to talk with me but they could not talk
English. I was anxious to talk too, but I could not so they hurried
around and got breakfast. They were at this time drawing rations
from the government and they got up a good breakfast. 23 The old man motioned to me to sit up to the table and we sat and ate all together. The old lady sat at the left-hand side of me and the old man at the right of me. I noticed that there were two cups of coffee by my plate, one on each side. The old lady was very anxious to keep my plate well filled. They had biscuits and coffee and meat. I ate some bread and meat and drank nearly a cup of coffee. I stopped and sat back in my chair. The old lady got up and shook me and pointed to the other cup of coffee. I shook my head because I was full then. They all looked very much surprised to see how bad I looked and how little I ate. I sat at the table until all the rest were done. What I had eaten was hurting me. After we had got up from the table the old man motioned to me to go up town. We were within about half a mile of Fort Gibson, 24 Before we got to town there was about a thousand Indians with me, it looked like. They wanted to talk to me.

When we got to town I found that Col. Phillips' headquarters were there. 25 Of course there was a large crowd gathered around me. At headquarters there was a tall slim light-completed young man that talked with me principally. He questioned me about the South. At last he asked me if I wanted to work. I was standing there leaning on my stick and I said, "I am not able to work." He said, "Oh, I know that you are not able to work but all I have got for you to do is to take care of two horses, to rub and curry and feed

23. The Creeks living near Fort Gibson had been refugees in southern Kansas from 1882 until they were returned to the Indian territory in the spring of 1864. They had arrived at the fort in June, 1864, in a very destitute condition. Since it was too late in planting season to plant spring crops, the Creeks had been forced to live on cardboard, wild cherries, and squirrels. For the betterment of the Creeks, Fort Gibson was established in 1864.

24. Fort Gibson, founded in 1824, was situated on the Grand river near its confluence with the Verdigris and Arkansas rivers. During the Civil War it was a point of departure for Union troops and a base for Union operations in the Indian territory. It became the center of military operations in the territory during the remainder of the war and the country immediately around it became a refuge for Union soldiers and sailors from the South. It was finally abandoned in 1866.

25. William Addison Phillips, a native of Paisley, Scotland, gained prominence in territorial Kansas as an Anti-slavery journalist and politician. He was one of the founders of the town of Salina in 1855. He enlisted in the Union army in 1861 and when the Third Indian regiment was formed at Kansas City, Mo., September 16, 1862, he was commissioned colonel of the regiment. He was stationed at Fort Gibson from April 1863, until the regiment was mustered out of service May 31, 1866. He was in the congress of the United States from 1875 to 1878. After his retirement he became special attorney for the Cherokee Indians, having become interested in their welfare while he was in command of Fort Gibson. —Dictionary of American Biography (New York, 1933), v. XIV, p. 548; Official Army Register of the Volunteer Forces of the United States Army for the Years 1881, '82, '83, '84, '85, Pt. VII, "Kansas" (Washington, 1867), p. 334.
them. I suppose that you can do that, can’t you?” “Yes, sir, I can do that.” “Well, do you see that little house up yonder?” “Yes, sir.” “You go up there and you will find a woman there. Stay there until I come. I will be there at noon.” So I went to the house and stayed until noon. He came in and sat down beside me and asked me about my trip. I told him, to which he replied, “Well, you had a ______ hard time. As I said, I have got two horses that I want you to take care of, and if you will stay here as long as I do I will give you ten dollars a month and your board.” I told him that I would do it. “Yes, and if you will stay with me until I get my men all mustered out and I get paid off I am going up to Kansas. I have a claim up there and if you will go with me and work for me, when you get able to work, I will raise your wages.” “Yes, sir, I will do it.” So Luke Parsons,26 for that was his name, jumped up and said, “Well, I guess you want some clothes, don’t you?” “Yes, sir, but I haven’t got any money.” “Oh, I know that you haven’t got any money but you come down town with me and I will get you some clothes.” And so we went off down town and into a store and he walked up to the storekeeper and said, “Let this man have what he wants.” And he turned to me and told me to call for what I wanted. I picked me out an $18.00 suit. He said, “Is that all you want?” “Yes, sir, that will do for the present, I guess.” He then said, “Go back and take care of the horses.” And so I took the horses and attended to them. About this time I commenced to have a very bad cough, so bad that I could not sleep at night. Luke Parsons asked me if I did not want some medicine. I told him that I did and he gave me some money and told me to go to the hospital doctor and get what I needed. He also told me to ask for money whenever I wanted it. I thanked him and told him that I would, but that I was afraid that I could never pay it back to him again. “That don’t make any odds, just ask and you may have it.” I stayed at Fort Gibson over three weeks and took care of the horses. When they got through mustering out the men Luke Parsons and I started to Kansas. We stopped one day and rested at Fort Scott.

26. Luke Fisher Parsons was born in Worcester county, Massachusetts, June 28, 1838. He came to Kansas territory in May, 1856, resolved to stay until it had been admitted to the Union as a free state. He became actively engaged in the struggle, fighting under John Brown at Osawatomie. He was one of ten men chosen by John Brown to accompany him on a venture which later proved to be the raid on Harper’s Ferry. The plan was long delayed and, when it materialized, several of the men, including Luke Parsons, had decided not to take part in it. He came to Salina in 1860 and took a claim near the townsite. During the early part of the war he served in the Sixth Kansas Volunteer cavalry but later was commissioned as first lieutenant in the Third Indian regiment. After the war he returned to Salina where he died April 23, 1926.—Luke Parsons, “Address at the Celebration of the Fiftieth Anniversary of the Battle of Osawatomie,” MSS. division, Kansas State Historical Society; Luke F. Parsons, biographical sketch in the Kansas State Historical Society’s Twenty-fifth Biennial Report (Topeka, 1927), pp. 126, 126.
About this time my cough got so very bad I had to let another Negro that had come from Fort Gibson drive the horses while I laid back in the wagon. The next day I was a little better and I took the team myself. We came through Council Grove. We came on up to Salina and stopped on the east side of the river. We got to Salina the 15th day of July, 1865. When we got there the river was so high that we could not cross so we camped on the east side of the river until it was low enough for us to cross.27 There were two hundred soldiers stationed there to keep the Indians out.28 When I saw the smoke coming out of the ground I did not know what it meant. I asked Mr. Parsons what that meant and he told me that they were dugouts. Says I, “What is a dugout?” and he told me that there was where people lived. I was very anxious to get across the river to see one of these dugouts. The river kept up about three weeks. At last we got the soldiers to take our baggage across and we swam the team. One of the horses wouldn’t swim and she came very near drowning. We got her to the bank at last but she was sick for two or three months.

We went up into Salina and Luke Parson had a little house there. Luke walked ahead up to the house and told us boys to come on and here was some Missouri rebels using his house for a laundry. There was a girl washing in there by the name of Delphine Lythe. Luke said, “Why, how do you do, Delphine. I have got a couple of boys here and I want them to stop in this house.” “Yes, Mr. Parsons, what did you bring them niggers here for? We don’t want to mix with niggers.” “Nobody wants you to mix with Negroes. If you will let them alone they won’t hurt you.” “Well, we don’t want to mix with niggers.” “Well, you needn’t mix with them unless you want to,” and then he walked off.

I drove up and unharnessed and waited for Delphine to get out of the house. It was getting along toward night and my horses were straying away. There was a lot of soldiers playing and fooling with her while she was washing and the sun was going down and we wanted to get our baggage into the house. We were sitting out there on the waggon when Simon says, “She is not as afraid of Negroes as she makes out to be.” “No, she is not half so afraid as she makes out or she would have been out of there hours ago.” The sun was

27. The Junction City Union reported the Smoky Hill river in flood on several different occasions during the month of July, 1865.

28. A blockhouse was ordered to be built at Salina in June, 1864. Troops were stationed there to protect the settlers from the Indians and to act as escorts for the emigrant trains. The Junction City Union for September 2, 1865, mentioned the issuance of an order abandoning all the military posts between Forts Riley and Larned. It is probable that the post at Smoky Hill crossing was included in that order.
going down and she was still fooling with the soldiers while we were waiting for her to get out of the house. I said, "I am going up to the house and ask her to let us bring our baggage in. It looks as though she was going to stay there all night." So I walked up to the house and said, "Look a here, we would like to bring our baggage in here if you could make room for us." She turned around and said, "All right, all right, I will get out." I walked back to the wagon and she was in there half of an hour longer. I believe that she went and lied on me and told the folks that that big nigger had drove her out of the house. She would have got me into trouble but there happened to be another family that disputed this. The next morning there was one of the soldiers came down to the wagon where we were. He was drunk. He said, "You are my friends. I like you." While he was there down came a red-headed Irishman and said, "Come out from among . . . niggers. Come out from . . . niggers anyway," and he ran up and took the soldier by the shoulder and went on swearing at a terrible rate so Simon said to me, "Larry, I be doggoned if I am going to stay here," and I said, "I am going to die right here because I have run enough."

After the Irishman had gone, Luke came. He said, "What! Boys, are they going to run you away from here?" "Yes, sir, it looks as if that is what they want to do." He said, "Larry, I should think that you had run far enough anyhow." "Yes, so I thought too, Mr. Parsons." Luke said that I was right in standing my ground. "Don't you let them do it. You have got as much right as they have." Mr. Parsons went to town and we boys went down the river to make some rails. We got some out and put up a dugout east of Salina and went there to live. Luke raised my wages after we went on the claim, from $10 to $30 a month. After I had stayed with him for two months he wanted to hire me for the year. I hired him for $20 a month with board and clothes. I stayed with him for thirteen months and then I left him and came to live with Mr. Robinson.\textsuperscript{29} Simon stayed with Mr. Parsons six months after I left, then he went over on the Saline and hired out, and the last I heard of him he went down to the Indian Territory. I worked for Mr. Robinson for three years, off and on, and then I got into the notion of taking me a claim and making a home for myself.\textsuperscript{29} When I came to Salina

\textsuperscript{29} B. F. Robinson. See Footnote 1.

\textsuperscript{29} Lapale made homestead entry January 12, 1869. It was necessary for him to contest the right to enter of an adverse claimant to the land, one Henry C. Cutten, \ldots who alleged settlement on the land September 27, 1868, under the preemption laws. A hearing was ordered held in the matter on January 12, 1869, before the register of the former District Land Office at Junction City, Kansas, at which time Samuel Brown offered testimony to the effect that he lived within one mile of the land described for 2½ years, that he did not
I was twenty-five years old and was without schooling. I had never gone to school a day in my life and I haven't any education yet but there is one thing I have, a good home and plenty of friends.

"know Henry C. Cutting and that no such person ever lived or improved the land which at that time was in an abandoned condition." Since Cutting did not appear for the hearing Lapeley was allowed to proceed with the entry. He received a patent for the land February 29, 1876.—Letter from R. S. Clinton, chief, Patents Division, Washington, D. C., July 14, 1876.