

Diary of Lewis Timothy Litchfield

[page 3]

Sept[.] 13

Have not been very well today, and have not had much to do.

There was a ratification meeting at Blanton at which Col[.] Lane and Dr[.] Wood had some difficulty which ended in Col[.] Lane challenging Wood. Wood refused to accept the challenge[.] Uncle Leonard stays with me tonight.

Sept[.] 14

[page 4]

Chapter First

The Departure

It was a beautiful day the 29th day of August, AD. 1854. The sun shone brightly in the heavens and the hot summer air was already giving place to the cool pleasant breezes of Autumn. Boston the "Yankee city" was as ever filled with tumult and the noisy hum of business[.] But what means the crowd at the Boston and Worcester depot, the streets round it were all crowded, and ever and anon go up shouts of applause from the multitude. Let us push our way through the dense throng of human beings, to the inside of the depot and examine for ourselves as to the cause of this noise.)

We see them in assembly of about two hundred persons

[page 5]

old and young, some gay and joyous, others sad and weeping, standing there, waiting for the cars to be got in readiness for their reception. (How sad is the scene). There is a father taking leave of a son, a mother of a daughter, a brother [*text stricken through*] brother, and sister [*text stricken through*] of sister, And why all this weeping? (They are about to start for Kansas, the second company of prisoners is in readiness to start for that goodly land of which so much has been said, and which has been the means of breaking the compromise between the north and the South.

Finally all is in readiness and they seat themselves in the cars and bid a final adieu to their friends, and shake warmly the friendly hand, some of them for the last time. The song of the occasion is sung, and off they go, amid deafening shouts, and cheers. "They have gone to plant a wall of men on freedoms southern line, and plant beside the cotton tree the [*text stricken through*] the rugged Northern pine."

Wat a company of self sacrificing persons. Little do they imagine what hardships and sufferings they will undergo. Through every place they pass they receive the same deafening shouts of applause.

At Syracuse NY they were presented with a bible with this inscription on it. "To establish civil and religious liberty in Kansas." Next we find ourselves with them seated on board the fine steamer Mayflower on our passage from

[page 6]

Buffalo to Detroit. There we assembled in the Cabin under our leader Gen[.] S.C. Pomeroy. This being the first opportunity of [*text stricken through*] a meeting to our selves. When all was still we kneeled in humbleness and humility before God, and poured out our hearts to him asking his guidance and direction. How similar this scene to the one of our forefathers crossing the Broad Atlantic to make their home in the new world.

We were on board the Mayflower going from the civilized regions of the East, to the uncivilized western country, To make our homes with the untamed indian.

We formed ourselves into an association and determined to settle together. Again we seated ourselves in the cars, at Detroit bound Onward to Chicago when we took the cars for St[.] Louis. We passed over this part of the journey without any thing new happening to us.

Thence we proceeded up the winding Missouri and shopped at Kansas City, very near the mouth of the Kansas river.

It is a small town about 500 miles, from the mouth of the Missouri, and is famous for its fine landing.

Here we halted to purchase our provisions, and cooking utensils, which consisted of [MS. illegible] flour and coffee, for provisions and a frying pan, kettle, and coffeepot made up the list of our cooking aparatus.

[page 7]

## Chapter 2nd

The arival

After pausing in Kansas City to purchase provisions, for about three days, we took up a line of march for Kansas Territory. Several of our company having [*text stricken through*] ox teams, we necessarily proceeded slow.

From Kansas City we proceeded on our journey through Westport, the last town in Missouri through which we passed. It is a flourishing town composed mostly of men of little or no principle who boast on their staunch proslavery principles. Here we had but little trouble however, excepting a few insults, and much abusive language.

Passing through Westport we entered the confines of Kansas. Beautiful was the scenery, extending as far as the eye could reach were boundless prairies, with here and there a group of trees, just as God had made them. The fertility of the soil was readily seen, by the very rank grass which was so [*text stricken through*] tall and thick that it was with difficulty that we could pass through it.

We travelled on the first day as far as the Quaker Mission, about Twelve miles from Westport. This is a beautiful place, carved out by the Quaker friends, is exclusively for the

benefit and instruction of the Shawnee [*text stricken through*] Indians. It has been a very flourishing school, and at the time when we were there they had over one thousand acres of land under cultivation. We camped about a half a mile from the Mission and pitched [*text stricken through*] tents near a beautiful spring of pure water[.]

[page 8]

Here we stopped for three days, Hunting and leading a life entirely new to us. This delay was occasioned by our leader's Doc. Rovinson, and Mr[.] Pomeroy, starting out into the territory to selected a place for our settlement.

On the evening of the third day, Gen[.] Pom. & Doc. Rob. rode into the camp, and were welcomed by Three times three hearty cheers[.] which complement the Gen. returned by making us a speech. Following him the Doc. reported their proceedings for the last three days. He said that they had proceeded up the Kansas River about 50 miles from its mouth, near the mouth of the great Wakarusa. He thought that we had better settle at the junction of these rivers. This case had already been taken up by about 20 men from New England who he said were willing to throw up all, as they had made no improvement upon them.

Moreover he said that this was the best town site in the whole Territory. A meeting of the entire camp was called, and it was voted that we should proceed at once to accept of their proposals, and get in readiness to start the next morning. The meeting was closed with three more hearty cheers, for our leaders.

The next morning might be seen great bustle in the pioneer camp. Tents were struck, fires put out, oxen hunted and yoked, and all getting in readiness to make an early start. About seven o'clock in the morning, all very in readiness we took a lingering look at our

[page 9]

late encampment, and bidding adieu to our friends, the Shawnees, we proceeded onward towards our destination.

We traveled onward for the space of three days, and on the afternoon of the fourth day we arrived at the junction of the Great Wakarusa River and Kansas river. We then proceeded up the Kansas River about five miles from this place. Here we were on the place which we were to call our home, no house in sight, and the boundless prairie only before, behind, and on our left. The noble Kansas rolled on our right. It was truly a lovely place. The prairie extends boldly up to the river with an elevation of about Thirty feet. To the west of us was a high Bluff, from whose summit could be seen the country for miles around us.

Immediately upon our arrival, all was bustle and confusion. A city of tents had sprung up, where ten minnits ago the Prairie hen had built their nests and reared their young for centuries.

Soon numerous fires could be seen blazing, in front of each tent throwing a cheerful radiance around. All seemed happy in their new situation, and thus was founded the first city in Kansas Territory.

[page 10]

Chapter Third.

Erecting Buildings.

The remainder of the week was spent in cutting and drying the grass, that we might have something softer than the ground to lie upon. Sunday was passed in silence, no work being done, and there being no place[,] public worship was not commenced.

Early the next morning we commenced preparations for the first building in the new city, which as yet had no name. Posts were cut and set in the ground and the frame of a building about 50 or 60 feet long was erected made of poles. During the week this frame work of poles was covered with thatch on the roof and with cotton cloth on the sides and ends.

It was scarcely completed before one of our company was prevailed upon to take charge of this new building in the capacity of a boarding house master. His [*text stricken through*] family consisted of his wife with two children, one a youth of Sixteen years, and the other a child of scarce two summers. The mother and wife was a feeble woman but notwithstanding all his weakness she commenced cooking for over 150 boarders with a patience and perseverance, found only in woman[.] This was done over a fire which was built beside of a hugh oak log and notwithstanding the meagre allowance of food, not a [*murmur?*] was heard. [*text stricken through*]

This building was also used for lodgers nearby[,] all the camp making their beds therein. These beds consisted of straw spread upon the ground, with a buffalo robe for covering, and perhaps a

[page 11]

pair of boots for a pillow.

Notwithstanding the hardness of the bed, the poor weary pioneer found the sleep as sweet as if he had been [*text stricken through*] upon a bed of the softest down, in the world. In one corner was a small camp tent, pitched there for the especial use of the landlord and his wife.

The evenings were spent around a large fire, while pleasant conversation and stories of bold adventure helped to pass the time very pleasantly. The hearty laugh might be heard for a great distance on the prairie silencing for a time the loud and piercing howls of the prairie wolf.

One story in particular I shall never forget, as it shows some of the inventive ingenuity of the Yankee mind[.]

One pleasant evening as all were engaged [*text stricken through*] telling and listening to the stories [*text stricken through*] which one by one [*text stricken through*] were told by some of the pioneer company, some told of adventures of past lives[,] others their adventures of the past day, and the story above mentioned is among the latter.

Rumors of Missouri difficulties had for several days past been rife, and [*text stricken through*] little or no confidence had been put in them. this was the first instance[.] I shall tell the story in nearly his own words.

He began, "Today as several of us were busily engaged in erecting a log house, a band of ten or a dozen men, came up to us, and after holding conversation between themselves for several moments, demanded that we leave the house and claim or they would kill every one of us. not being near their number we were in quite a puzzle what to do. Finally a Green looking yankee, one of our

[page 12]

company spoke out and said, "See here strangers, If ye know what is best for ye, ye wouldn't be often stopping long in these digginns. I've got a machine in this tent that I can shoot ye all in less than no time. I turn a crank and my boy pours in powder and shot, and every time I turn the crank it shoots." The fellow sang out to his son, "Tim get the machine in order, pour in a keg of powder and a hundred pounds of buckshot. Well boys would you believe it? them fellers left the claim in double, quick time.

This was received with hearty bursts of laughter and many shouts of good! good! Thus were the evenings passed.

#### Chapter Fourth

##### The first Meeting

As yet there had been no public worship in the new city, there being no suitable place. But now sunday had again arrived and the new boarding house being finished it was deemed best by all that there should be public religious worship forthwith. We had among us a very pious and devoted minister in the person of Rev[.] G[.]Y. [Lunn?], a native of the state of New Jersey, who readily took charge of the divine services. Early in the morning, of the holy day, might be seen, bodies of the pioneers busily, engaged, some washing at the pure spring of living waters, and some arranging seats in the house for those who chose to come in.

[page 13]

Very few seats could be afforded, and therefore there had to be new straw placed over the ground.

About nine o'clock all the camp assembled in the large house, together with some persons who had settled within 8 or ten miles, of us. How solemn was the scene. A band of men, women and children, over two thousand miles from their native land, bowing down before the throne of the great ruler of the universe, to acknowledge him as their king. We had a sermon from Rev. [Lunn?], who had been sent out to the wilderness of K. to preach the Gospel as a missionary. How affecting was the appeal[.] How necessary that men so far from the comforts and refinements of civilized life should have some higher power than man, in whom they may put their trust. To us it was indeed a solemn time. "The establishment of "religious-liberty in Kansas."

We heard two services, in the forenoon and in the afternoon, and all felt refreshed to commence the duties of the new week with increased energy of spirit. During the week,

meetings were held to choose a name for the new city. Numerous were the names proposed from which Wakarusa and Lawrence were chosen and voted upon. The vote was decided in favor of Lawrence. The town shares were also equally divided among the members of the Lawrence Association, as we now termed ourselves, and a survey of the city commenced.

[page 14]

Chapter 5th

### Difficulties

But our possession of the best site on the Territory was looked on with mistrust by our Missouri neighbors, and the Indian title not yet being extinguish[ed] they sent up several men who should contest the site with us. They came and settled upon our site claiming precedence to us. One in particular[,] a Mr[.] Baldwin who, being particularly anxious about the Yankee City[,] tried to remove one of our tents. Not being able to do this alone he brought on about seventy of his Missouri friends to back him. Our party[,] seeing that they were going too far[,] thought best to cool their ardor a little[,] collected with shotguns, rifles[,] pistols, and every kind of firearms to appease them.

Gen[.] Robinson drew us up in battle array with orders to fire if they touched the tents. But being taken aback by this instance of Yankee valor they sent one of their women to remove the tent. But this was prevented by the stalwart arms of our pioneers. Finally seeing we were determined they withdrew and left us in peaceable possession.

Not so with our other neighbors who had squatted on our city site. They still maintained the dispute, which although it did not meet our claim to the site, stopped the sale of our lots. These difficulties in-

[page 15]

creased as the city increased and harsh and angry words were exchanged between the parties and even some blows.

But still the city increased every day. The foundation of the new sawmill was laid and waiting for the timber to complete the structure. The city was now coming notorious in Missouri and frequent were the rumors of an invasion from that quarter to expel as they said those d-d yankees.

These rumors were not heeded as they were deemed as simple rumors, and settlers kept build'g[.] One method of building I must not fail to mention[.] As there could be no lumber procured other means had to be used to provide shelter for the houseless inhabitants. One way was this. Oak trees which were straight grained, and about 3 or 4 feet through were selected, and felled. They were then sawed into blocks of three or four feet in length. These blocks were then split into bolts as the pieces are called. These bolts can now be handled easily, and being about [t] from 6 to ten inches square are [MS. illegible] or split into boards about half an inch in thickness. These although they are not so good as sawed boards are better than nothing, and I think that I am safe in saying that more than twenty houses in the city were made of these boards.

[page 16]

Chapter Sixth

A Funeral

[page 17]

Leominster July [11?]

Gentlemen of Leominster

I have [*text stricken through*] received from the hand of [*text stricken through*] the chairman of your committee a present of [blank in MS.]\$ to be appropriated for a rifle[.] I thank you for the present and the motives which mooved you to make it but more than all for the deep interest which you take in the great course of humanity now before the American people.

Monday I start for the distant Territory of Kansas, when slavery and freedom are opposed in battle array. Although I am but one in the great cause yet the rifle which I may carry[.]

I do not go to Kansas to fight[.] I go there with my whole soul filled to overflowing with love for civil and religious freedom[.] I go there to live in a peaceable manner, and to speak, and act as the constitution of this union gives me the liberty to do with freedom.

This rifle which you have given me shall be consecrated to Freedom[.] its name shall be freedom. and shall be used as a last resort, against fellow man, where my rights, those rights bequeathed to me by my revolutionary lives are invaded. This last resort I deem justifiable in the sight of God and man as without Freedom what is life worth?

Better, Stronger, Braver men than myself have been forced to deliver up their arms to the foes of Liberty[.]

[page 18]

Of this I shall say nothing, as I intend that the rifle is to become a part of my person as much as an arm or hand, and so long as the warm blood runs through my veins, it shall never be [MS. illegible] by the touch of a slaveholder[.]

[*text stricken through*]

We shall watch with intense interest your moovements during the coming campaign, and if you wish to rejoice our hearts place John C. Fremont in the presidential Chair.

Yours with Grat.,

L.T.L[.]

Kansas is free and our Country is safe[.] Freedom will be national and slavery sectional[.]

-God-

On whatever side we turn our eyes how visible is seen traces of a supreme being. Traces of a being who being omnipotent, has used his power in so wise and wonderful a manner[.] How grand are his works, how worthy of admiration even from the angels themselves, who were seated by him.

What power could create worlds on so large and beautiful a scale, cover them with a beautiful vegetation, and cause them to revolve in beautiful concert and harmony round each other, receiving one from another, light, heat, and numberless advantages except an omnipotent king.

Truly God is all wise, and his flaws cannot be fathomed by man, one of his creatures.

[page 19]

If then God is a wise and good God, why should we not wish to obey his commandments?

[page 20]

We here experienced, most of us at least, the [first?] of lying on the ground, with only blankets or buffalo robes to cover us, and many were the jokes that were cracked at each other's expense.