

Others of the Ohio Settlement

Almost a year before the Baldwin brothers' Ohio party came to Kansas, John A. Wakefield unloaded his wagons and pitched his tent on the northwest quarter of Section 31 on July 19, 1854. Other parties may have made claims within the limits of what became Kanwaka Township, but none became actual settlers until several weeks afterwards. The claims of Henry L. Baldwin and Judge Wakefield were adjoined, but were intersected by the California Road and the trail from McGee's Crossing to Lecompton. Judge Wakefield was elected to act as judge at a public meeting of settlers, on the occasion of a contested claim trial before the Squatter Court organized on the 26th of August, 1854.

HEATH BROTHERS

There were two Heath brothers, Judson and Erastus. Judson's claim was located on the northeast quarter of Section 31, making him a neighbor of Judge Wakefield. His brother's claim was just across the road, ¼ mile north of Deacon Henry Baldwin and east of Samuel Walker. At this location, Erastus, father of two boys, built a two-story house that is still standing, at the southeast quarter of Section 25. There is evidence that Erastus, at least, was active in the Underground Railroad:

I know something about the Underground R. R. One station was at the old Heath place and I remember seeing fugitives there. One night in those early days, about midnight, John Brown and a party came to our house and waked us all up asking for information as to roads. It was the same party that went with him to Harper's Ferry later.

William E. Connelley also connects Erastus with the Underground Railroad:

In the fall of 1860 one Heath (Erastus) put in a foundation for a stone house near Kanwaka, a village some four miles southeast of Lecompton. Cold weather coming on, the house could not be completed at that time, so, joists were put in, and on these joists prairie hay was stacked to keep out the rain and snow and to keep the walls dry. Some Underground Railroad enthusiast hid a runaway Negro under this hay and boasted that Jake Herd could not find him. Some school children found him and told Jake of his whereabouts. Herd took Quantrill and some others and went to the house and got the Negro. In taking him out the hay was burned and the people were attracted to the place. The walls of the building were ruined by the fire. A sort of pitched battle took place between the friends of the Negro and Herd and his followers but they got away with the Negro and took him to Missouri and sold him. This was very late in the fall.

For this crime Quantrill was prosecuted by the Hon. Samuel A. Riggs, county attorney of Douglas Co.

Evidence of Judson Heath's Underground Railroad activities is sketchier. But we do know that both Heaths were neighbors of other abolitionists and took part in many skirmishes against proslavery ruffians. The close relationship between the Heath brothers and Henry Baldwin is evidenced by the fact

that “Judd” Heath boarded with Henry’s family for quite a long time, and upon the birth of Henry’s son, Harry, “Judd” was delegated to drive the livestock to the river for water, while Henry rode to town after Dr. Prentice.

Erastus Heath testified the following in Claims Court on behalf of Henry Baldwin:

Being duly sworn, saith:

Have been acquainted with petitioner three years; he and I reside about seven miles west of Lawrence; his claim joins mine; he is a citizen of Douglas County; during the summer of 1856, from about the month of April ‘til August and September armed bands of men, not residents of the neighborhood, had possession of that portion of the territory, and [the] petitioner, myself, and other citizens were frequently driven away from home during that summer, sometimes a short time and sometimes for weeks; it was not safe for any man to remain on his claim; in our vicinity being wood and water, the marauding bands mentioned occupied that vicinity, as it also commanded the California road between Topeka and Kansas City. About May 1856, some parties of armed men from the camp mentioned took possession of Baldwin’s house, arrested men of the road, and took from them such things as they wanted. I know that Baldwin had an excellent ox-yoke, worth \$6; a spade, worth \$1.25; two augers, worth \$ --; he had a hat, clothing, etc., in the house, which I remember as of the very best class; should estimate the articles that I know he lost at about \$74. I helped Baldwin make out the bill presented with petition, partly from recollection of myself.

. . . I know that petitioner’s trunk was broken open and robbed by the bands mentioned, when we returned to his house, after things got quieted in October, found his furniture all broken, destroyed, or stolen; a grindstone burned in my house, belonged half to the petitioner; the cattle mentioned were lost . . . they were much injured and lame . . . After the property was taken, I was at petitioner’s house as early as any people from Lawrence dared to go to that neighborhood, and all the pre-mentioned seemed to have been taken away.

Sworn to before me this 12th day of March, 1859
EDWARD HOAGLAND, COMM.

COLMAN

The claim immediately south of Judge Wakefield’s became the property of Ezekiel Andrus and Mary Jane Wendell Colman, who had come to Kansas with the Third Emigrant Aid party, leaving Boston, Massachusetts on September 26, 1854, and arriving in Lawrence on October 18th of that year. For nearly two years they lived on a farm three miles southwest of Lawrence, then moved into Lawrence to run a grocery store. In 1858, they purchased a farm just south of the California Road. Ezekiel, an ardent abolitionist, erected a large house known as “Colman’s Retreat” in the floor of whose kitchen was a trap door or loose board that could be lifted up, and slaves who had escaped from their masters hidden beneath. A paper written and delivered by Nellie Colman Bigsby, at a meeting of the Douglas County Historical Society of January 29, 1936, relates that “. . . [a] darky named Neely spent considerable time [in this hideout]. Another station was on a claim that Robert Buffum gave up on the northeast quarter of Section 31. . . “ This is the location of Judson Heath’s claim.

Margaret Colman Wulfkuhle (great-granddaughter of Ezekiel Colman), writes:

One fugitive named Neeley had been brought to Kansas by John Brown who was a frequent visitor in the Colman home. Southern sympathizers saw him working in the fields with other men and chased him into the basement of a stone barn on the Alvora Leonard property (Judson Heath's place), where he was captured. Then they started the march on foot back to Missouri to collect a \$500 reward. Somewhere near the border, Neeley eluded his captors and was back at Colman's within a few days. During the Civil War, Lieutenant Charles Colman met Neeley again when both were serving in the Union Army in Arkansas.

Many fathers and sons served together during the Civil War. The Huddleston's, Gardner's, Macy's, White's, Jesse's, Steele's, etc. all represented fathers and sons in battle. Ezekiel Colman, like the others, enlisted and served as Lieutenant of Company A, 1st Kansas Colored Volunteers. His son, Charles Jackson Colman, joined Company C, 9th Kansas Volunteers on October 6, 1861, and was promoted to 1st Lieutenant, Co. H, 1st Kansas Colored Volunteers on May 1, 1863. He was killed in action on April 18, 1864 at the Battle of Poison Springs in Arkansas, while commanding a company of Negro troops. Charles was the second of Ezekiel and Mary Jane's fourteen children (six of whom died in infancy). Their fourth son, Cosma Torrienta, was born October 8, 1845 at Concord, Massachusetts. Cosma, at the age of eighteen, enlisted as a volunteer in the 14th Kansas Cavalry Regiment and was one of the twenty-two recruits encamped in Lawrence at the time of Quantrill's Raid. He escaped with his life on that awful day mainly because it was his week to cook for the other recruits and he had arisen before sunrise. After hearing the first shots he ran and climbed upon a shed where he saw the dust and was able to get a glimpse of the raiders galloping in and shooting right and left. "I ran to the tents," he said later, "and yelled, 'Quantrill is here.'" See Dr. Richard B. Sheridan, *Quantrill and The Lawrence Massacre: A Reader Part II*, p. 197-203 for the full text of Cosma Torrienta Colman's experiences during the Quantrill Massacre.

BEAM

Every history of Lawrence, Kansas, includes the story of the slaughter during Quantrill's raid, of the recruits under the command of Second Lieutenant L. J. Beam. Any historical account about L. J. will state that the day before the infamous raid, he had gone to Leavenworth for arms for his men. They had drawn clothing, camp equipment and tents, but had not been mustered in nor armed. He saw the smoke from the burning town, but thought it was a prairie fire.

In 1979, during an extensive taped interview with Steve Crockett (grandson of L. J. Beam), he states that "Major", as he was called, never quite got over the fact that he was absent from his men on the day of Quantrill's Raid. He bemoaned that he was unable to aid in their defense. Mr. Crockett said, "My grandfather always thought that he (Quantrill) knew he was in Leavenworth that day. Every Memorial Day he would drive to Lawrence from his home in Richland in his buggy and go to the cemetery.

Leroy J. Beam was born in Ohio on March 8, 1839. When he was eight years old, his family moved first to Clinton, Illinois, and later (in 1856) to Clinton, Kansas, where they obtained land southwest of Clinton on Rock Creek. Leroy, along with his brothers, preempted three-quarter-sections of land. (The

northeast and southeast quarters of Section 4 went to Leroy, Servy and George; the southeast quarter went to brother John).

Leroy was a free-state man who fought in all the early battles of Territorial Kansas, was in the cavalry under John Brown when they made the attack on Col. Treadwell's camp of Georgians (Ft. Saunders), and was under Capt. Samuel Walker when they took Ft. Titus. After the raid on Lawrence and the slaughter of his recruits during the Civil War, L. J. recruited another group of men, went into the 15th Kansas still a Lieutenant and was eventually promoted to Major of the Regiment. He participated in the defense against Price's Raid in 1864, acting as Adjutant to General Blair. He was mustered out of service in October of 1865.

After returning from service, Leroy married a Clinton girl, Sarah Ray, on August 13, 1866, with her father, Luke E. Ray, officiating. Ray had come from Missouri – originally from Virginia – with his family in 1861, barely escaping with his life after losing all of his property for his known Unionist sentiments. After their marriage, Leroy and Sarah did not return to his farm near Clinton, Leroy feeling that there was a price on his head because of his free-state activities. Instead, they moved to a farm near Richland, Kansas, taking ownership of two quarters in Section 27 east of town, still near the Douglas County line. Here Leroy built a beautiful stone house (still standing), maintained a fine orchard, and was a successful farmer. Sarah gave birth to seven children, one of whom, Cora, married Robert Crockett of Richland, the father of Steven Crockett.

The Beam's, Ray's and Crockett's were very divided on the slavery issue. Although Unionists (i.e. opposed to secession), the Ray's were nevertheless pro-slavery. The Crockett's, too, were from Virginia and presumably pro-slavery. The Beam's, on the other hand, were anti-slavery and staunch free-staters. Their intermarriage with the Ray's and Crockett's tore the families apart, as happened often in the Border States.