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JULIA A. HAND  
DIARY  
1871 - 1875  
(Extracts)

EXTRACTS FROM THE DIARY OF

JULIA A. HAND

1871 - 1875

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At the age of 24, having been married 4 years and living in or near Plainville, Illinois, near Hannibal, Missouri, my mother, Julia A. Hand, wife of Thompson Burton Hand began writing a daily diary on Sunday, January 1, 1871, which she maintained continuously until June 9 (her birthday) 1875. The purpose of the following pages by me are to give a resume of events covering the migration of my folks to Kansas and subsequent happenings up to the end of the diary.

On Sunday, September 29, 1872, my mother and dad and their two children, Herbert and Albert, bade their friends adieu and started west by wagon. They made sixteen miles the first day but after two days they decided that their load was too heavy so they unloaded a portion of it and shipped it. At the end of three days there was some necessary blacksmithing to do. On the evening of the 3rd of October they arrived at Glasgow, Missouri, at sunset and crossed the Missouri river on the ferry.

On Friday, October 4th, a twenty-four hour delay to doctor one of the horses.

Tuesday, October 8, camp was made at the fair grounds in Lexington, Missouri.

Thursday, October 10, 1872, Dad's 30th birthday, Mother gives him a volume of Shakespeare for his birthday.

Friday, October 11, 1872, marked the beginning of their life to be for many years in Kansas as they crossed the state line this day. This day turned out to be a warm reception for them as the wagon sheet caught fire but there was not too much damage.

October 14th and 15th: have lame horse and lame calf. So, on October 15 Fred Bolen, who is traveling with Dad, leaves his lame horse and Dad sells the calf for three dollars.

One experience by the group in Kansas was the shortage of water and firewood.

October 20th, 1872, group gets almost to Newton, but Fred Bolen gets stuck in the mud so camp is made for the night. No wood, but buffalo chips are used for fire.

On Monday, October 21st, after leaving Newton and crossing the Little Arkansas river, the team gets stuck in the river on a log and Mother has to crawl out the back with the children as there was danger of tipping over.

Tuesday, October 22nd, camp on Cow creek within sight of Hutchinson.

Wednesday, citizens of Hutchinson persuade the men to look at the country, so they camp again on Cow creek near the railway.

Thursday, October 24, Dad and Fred Bolen at a standstill and at last conclude to go to Wichita and enter their claims so leave here and start at noon. (On foot?)

Friday, October 25th: Trouble this morning. Old Bill, the horse gone; no trace of him. Mother saddles Cain and rides out on the Newton road seven miles but no trace, but goes north of town and finds him tied to a post near a house.

October 26th, folks start for their new home nine miles (SW) from Hutchinson. Had trouble crossing the Arkansas river and camped on an open prairie. Not a drop of water or a stick of wood.

Sunday, October 27, men go for surveyors. Arrive about dark. Dad takes them over to Mr. Carter's. October 28th, 29th and 30th, Mother cooks for the surveyors and they finish their work.

Friday, November 1st: Dad begins his house today. Fred takes sick (on purpose perhaps). Mother looks at house and thinks it will be a long time before they can live in it.

For the next few days not much is accomplished except looking for lost cows. However, on November 6th they moved from their camp down to the combination sod and timber house. A prairie fire disturbs them.

Up until November 11 routine work was mostly hauling water, rounding up cows and calves and buffalo chips for wood. One round-up of the cows indicated that one of the calves had been attacked either by a dog or a wolf as he had lost about one-half of his tail.

November 11th Dad takes off the roof of their combination home and puts it on different. The next few days are spent trying to keep warm with buffalo chips, hauling water and digging a well. Dad makes fifty cents showing some men over the country.

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SW<sup>4</sup>

(From information other than what is included in this diary it seems that my folks were the first settlers in Salt Creek township in Reno county, Kansas. (SE $\frac{1}{4}$  34-23-7) And it was hoped by my folks that the homestead on which they lived would be on the railroad instead of two miles north of it. Newton, Kansas, when they arrived was the end of the Santa Fe line and only a tool shed was located at what is now Hutchinson.)

November 12, 1872: For the next few days pretty much the same routine prevails. Hauling water every day. Each time Mother tries to do the washing she runs out of water before she finishes. Then the chore of rounding up the cattle and hauling hay. Dad doing some work on his stable. Also makes another fifty cents showing some men around the country.

November 25, 1872: This entry of the diary indicates that their almost daily trips for water were to Salt creek about three miles north of the homestead. Also that Dad is still digging in his well.

Starting off in December work continues on the well by Dad and a neighbor by the name of Mr. Cossey. They finally strike water but have to curb the well to prevent cave-ins. Now they melt snow to water the stock. Mother states December 25th to be a cold and lonely Christmas for all of them. No Santa Claus comes. She does pop some corn and boil some molasses candy for the babies. Since some of Mother's entries are quite faded I find that the Mr. Coosey mentioned above probably should be spelled Causey. Mother mentions stopping there on the way to town so I assume they were located between the homestead and Partridge (then Reno Center). Many of the neighbors state that there is an awful lot of sickness among their horses.

December 29: Mother states that they put ASAFETIDA on the horses' bridles to keep them from getting sick. If it was good for horses it must have been good for humans. I remember wearing a chunk of it sewed in a pouch around my neck day after day at school. We all had to do it. If only one pupil did it he certainly would be chased off the grounds.

And so ends a cold snowy December, 1872, for my folks and their neighboring pioneers.

January, 1873: Most of the month has to do with buffalo hunters. They come mostly in pairs. Two have walked for 24 hours and wish to rest and get warm.

January 27: Two hunters stop to wait out the storm. Have to stay all night. More hunters on way home stop to

warm. Folks have lost one of their two horses and Lill, the cow, unable to stand. They have to bring her into the house. Mother feels that they will be out of living creatures by spring.

February 2: Lill, the cow, still down but eating well. Dad gets Mr. Mills and Mr. Holiday to help get her up.

February 4: Dad received seven letters and twenty dollars. Makes him feel so good he buys Mother a new wash tub and wash board.

February 6: Dad works at his stable and well curb.

Feb. 7: Lill, the cow, is better so she is put outside.

Up to this point the following names have been mentioned in the diary:

- Mr. & Mrs. Causey and three girls.
- Fred and Lucy Bolen and children.
- Mr. Mills
- Mr. and Mrs. Holiday
- Mr. Walters
- Mr. Hale
- Mr. Carter

Feb. 12: Of course Dad and Mother did not know at this time that twenty-one years later this date would be my birthday. But Dad must have suspected it for with the prospect of having to feed me and eleven other children he got a gun and wanted to go hunting with Fred Bolen the next day.

All through this part of the season all members of the family have had severe chills--and often.

Feb. 28: Dad arrives home from the hunt about 10 o'clock. He suffered ague on the trip but brings home lots of meat.

March 1: Folks receive word that the portion of their things that they shipped in Missouri to lighten their load on September 30th, 1872, is at the depot (Hutchinson). Mother wonders how they will get them home. Freight service seemed to be rather slow in those days--five months for delivery to an adjoining state. Of course they had to extend the railroad in order to that well. (Railroad had reached Hutchinson, June, 1872.)

March 6-11: Usual homestead routine.

March 11: Men gather bones for sale. They receive \$4.00 per ton for them.

March 12: Dad with the help of Fred Bolen and Mr. Holliday get the well done by noon and immediately hunters water eleven head of horses out of it.