

Go South and be FREE

PART II: John W. Williamson's Account of the Pawnee Removal

Introduction
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During the winter of 1874–75, almost all of the Pawnee tribe moved from their traditional Nebraska homeland to a new reservation in Oklahoma. In October, 1874, a young agency employee, John W Williamson, led a group of 40 tribal representatives to select a new reservation near the Wichita Agency. Shortly after this group left the Pawnee Agency, near Genoa, Nebraska, most of the tribe decided to head south with them. At the age of 24, Williamson found himself in charge of moving over 1,400 Pawnee men, women, and children some 500 miles south into Indian Territory.

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The journey across Nebraska and Kansas was made with much difficulty. The trip took place during November and December, across country largely unfamiliar to Williamson. Most of the Pawnees were dismounted, resulting in a slow rate of travel. Forage for the horses was scarce, and provisions for the Indians had to be located and purchased on the way. Finally, moving a large number of Indians, even friendly Pawnees, through recently settled areas presented further problems. At the time of the Pawnee migration, war was raging between the US Army and the Cheyenne, Comanche, and Kiowa tribes in the Red River country. Settlers on the Kansas frontier were apprehensive, and in one instance openly hostile to Williamson and his charges.

By January, 1875, the Pawnee exodus had reached Medicine Lodge Creek, just north of the Kansas-Oklahoma border. Williamson's narrative continues as they enter Indian Territory and near the tribe's new home.

"THE MOVING OF THE PAWNEES"

By John W Williamson

The weather became better. In a few days we were journeying south again. This was the last white settlement we saw on our trip. After traveling several days the food supply for Mr. Alexander and myself began to run pretty low. We concluded we would have to ride on ahead and make faster time, or we would be destitute for food. We did not know how far we were from the Cheyenne and Arapahoe Agencies, but we knew we were nearing them. We thought we could safely leave the Indians now, as there were no more white settlements for them to bother and they had for food considerable meat which constituted their main diet. Strange as it was, we saw no buffalo or deer further south either as they must have been pretty well hunted down by these southern Indians. In fact on our long journey, contrary to expectation, we found little game to amount to anything. I held council with them and told them what I desired to do. This was found to be agreeable to them.

In the morning we started out in our wagon in company with Harry Coons, a half breed, Brave Chief, and his eighteen year old son.³⁷ These we had concluded to take with us. They took some meat and put it with our remaining food. It took us seven days to reach the Arapa-

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hoe and Cheyenne agencies. We made about 20 miles a day. The fourth day out we met with a small band of hostile Cheyenne comprised of 7 men and one squaw. These Indians we met in a small valley about 11 o'clock in the forenoon. They evidently planned on capturing our outfit and showed fight, but as we were in a good position at the edge of a narrow strip of dense timber did they realize this.

Brave Chief was out a little ways and made the Indian signs that we would resist them and fight back. When they see they could not get



us to run from them, they crossed the timber and went out of our sight. He did not know what to make of these actions, whether they had abandoned their efforts of capturing us or whether they were going to get in a better position and then attack us at closer range. As we were talking and discussing what to do, Brave Chief suggested that we go down along the timber further to some fallen trees. When we reached these fallen trees, we could see through the timber, it being narrower and less thick at this point. We halted there, anxiously waited, and wondered what would happen next.

We didn't wait long until we heard them talking on the other side of the timber. We then concluded they had to come thru this opening. We then decided that we would stand in line. As the opening was narrow and they would come thru one at a time, we would shoot them as they did this. The arrangement made was that I was to shoot the

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first one and so on if they came through. They surly hadn't expected to find us here, as they started to come thru the opening.

The first one to show his appearance was a Cheyenne Chief who I afterwards learned was Medicine Arrow.³⁸ He was a fine looking, middle aged Cheyenne with a large silver medal hanging on his chest and painted and dressed in full war costume. As I raised my rifle, he at once dropped his and threw up his hands. Brave Chief called and told me not to shoot. The Cheyenne then turned and facing the remainder of his band motioned them back. I then instructed Brave Chief to tell him in the sign language to come clear out in the opening and dismount while I held the gun on him. He complied with this. Brave Chief picked up his rifle and also searched him for other firearms. We then had them all come thru in the same manner. The last was the squaw most gayly dressed in an Indian costume. She was the young wife of the Chief.

After taking all their firearms and putting them in our wagon, we parleyed with them thru Brave Chief using the sign language. They then begged for something to eat. We talked this over and concluded to go down by the creek, build a fire, and cook them some coffee. We



John Williamson, seen here in his latter years, became a trusted friend of the Pawnee before their removal from Nebraska (opposite page) (Courtesy the Nebraska State Historical Society).

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made them go ahead. We followed after with our hands on our guns. Before reaching the creek we found a little clear brook. Here we stopped and seated our guests on a log close up beside each other. We then built a fire between them and our wagon which was close by. I then placed Brave Chief on the head of the log beside the Cheyenne Chief, as they were busily talking the sign language. Mr. Alexander and I stood by with our Winchester rifles. Harry Coons and Brave Chief's son searched them for ammunition and cartridges which they removed from them. This we found to be a small am't. It was divided amongst us five. We then cooked a big pot of coffee, as we had a good supply of coffee and sugar.

While preparing this Brave Chief came to me and asked me if it wouldn't be wise for them to try and smoke the pipe of peace with the Cheyenne Chief. He said as they were going to move down here and the Cheyennes and Pawnees were at enmity with each other it would be advisable to do this. He also feared that when we turned these loose they might find other Cheyennes, and we might have serious trouble. I told him to learn if he could accomplish this it would be a very wise thing. I gave him tobacco from the wagon. He put it in his pipe and put on a coal of fire from the camp fire. He then took it over to the Cheyenne Chief and offered it to him to smoke. He did not smoke but handed it back to Brave Chief and motioned for him to smoke. Brave Chief took a few puffs as customary, then returned the pipe to the Cheyenne Chief, insisted of him smoking it. He passed it on down the line. The rest took each a few puffs. It was then passed to Harry Coons and Brave Chief's son who in turn smoked, but when passed to Mr. Alexander and myself we tho't we would be as stubborn as the Cheyenne chief. We refused to smoke. Brave Chief came over to me.

This so enraged Mr. Alexander and myself to think that after we were going to cook coffee for them and then their chief refused the pipe that we concluded we would shoot the whole bunch of them. This would guard us against their going and spreading the news to other Indians that were in the country. We called Harry Coons and Brave Chief's son over to us and told them our plans and for them to be ready to lend assistance so none would escape. They consented to the plan. We then called Brave Chief and told him what we intended to do. He advised us not to do this. He said it would be best to return them their guns as we had all their ammunition and then turn them loose. He felt satisfied that we were close in to the agencies. They would not have time to do us much harm.

We reluctantly consented to this. We gave them some coffee and

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some home made camp bread all though we very short of this article. We still stood guard over them while they ate and drank. When they had finished, we gave them their guns and told them to leave. They tarried quite a while and begged for their ammuniton, but we of course refused them this. They finally left us. We ate some bread and drank coffee and then started on our way again traveling until very late in the night.

Nothing further happened until within a short distance from the agencies in Canadian River valley as riding down the valley we saw a U.S. flag on top of a hill a short distance ahead of us. This flag was waved in such peculiar motion that we did not understand what it meant, but we felt sure anyway we must be getting in close to the agencies. As we looked down the valley on the hill in the opposite direction another flag was signaling. It sure was a welcome sight, as the U.S. flag always is, but particular this time to me I felt its protection more than ever I afterwards learned that these were outposts. A hole was made about 4 or 5 feet deep. In this a soldier stood and held this flag staff and signalled when ever anyone was approaching.

As we turned a little bend, we saw in plain view a large camp over which floated Old Glory ³⁹ This was a short distance from Cheyenne Agency As we approached up close, we were met by guards. We had to give satisfactory replies to their questions. Upon agency [arriving?] about three o'clock in the afternoon I at once reported to the agent, John O. [D.] Miles. Upon learning who I was he gave a most cordial welcome and said he had been looking for us for some time as he had rec'd word from the Indian department of our coming and he had been instructed to care for us when we arrived. I told him the main tribe would arrive later The first thing he did was to have a man take our ponies and give them corn. This was the first time our horses had had any grain to eat for a long time. They were very poor and in a weakened condition. We explained our very hungry condition. He at once sent us five to the Indian mess kitchen with orders to feed us immediately and, after eating, for me to report to him again at his office.

When we reached the mess house, I handed the lady in charge a note from the agent. We explained to her our extreme hunger after such a long journey and scant provisions. She was a very kind and fine elderly lady She at once set on a bowl of bread and milk for each of us. This looked mighty good but rather a small amount for a hungry man. But this is where she showed more wisdom than us. She realized that

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if she would fill us on a hearty meal when we were so hungry it would be likely to make us sick. She explained to us [to] eat that and it being in the middle of the afternoon she would give us more at supper time.

After eating our bowl of bread and milk I reported to the agent's office. We talked about when he could expect the remaining band. He also asked me if we had met with any hostile Indians on our trip. I told him of the seven Cheyennes we had captured and turned loose. He took me over to head quarters at the military camp and asked me to give the account of it to the General there in charge. I recounted our trouble with these Indians and also told him of our desire to kill them instead of turning them loose and asked him what the government would have done in that case. He said, "I wished you had killed them. I would have seen that you would have had a medal for it." He then explained that this chief Medicine Arrow, or sometimes called Medicine Water, was an escaped Cheyenne from prison and was a very bad Indian causing lots of trouble.

This military camp was cavalry men composed of negroes except the officers. This camp was stationed here on account of the outbreak among some of each of the four tribes: Cheyennes, Arapahoes, Ki-aways [Kiowas], and Comanches. The last two tribes, living some distance from here, would come here and join with the Cheyennes and Arapahoes on the war path. Thinking it over now it seems that we run a big risk in going down in a country with part of these tribes on the war path, but we were very fortunate in not encountering, only this small band. These same Indians would go up on the border of Kansas and commit murders and other deprivations. People who have read and are familiar with Custer's *Life on the Plains*, written by himself, will recall of the killing of some German families and the capture of a 14 yr old and an 18 yr old girl by the Cheyennes. Those girls were held by them for several months suffering all kinds of torture until finally rescued by General Custer ⁴⁰

The agent and military officer held council with the remaining Indians on the reservation and told them of the coming of the Pawnee tribe. They knew their hatred of the Pawnees, and they worked to insure friendly terms of these Indians. They told them they wanted them to receive the Pawnees as friends. They agreed to all this. In the course of a week the Pawnees arrived in very hungry condition, but other wise all right. Strange as it seems to me now the only death we had on our long journey was one and that was Spotted Horse whose death we refered to before.

After remaining here sufficient time to rest up and put our horses

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in better condition, the agent supplied us with food and we started south again on our way to the Whitchitas. It did not take us many days to finish our trip as we were all rested up good and could travel faster Our fear of the hostile Indians spurred us on at greater speed. When in a short distance of the Whitchitas we camped for a day

Preparations were made for their arrival there in this manner Whenever a tribe of Indians went to visit another tribe, this visiting tribe would expect and always receive ponies and gifts. This was the way they received those ponies. The prominent Pawnee men got together, and each cut two sticks about 6 in. long and put his own individual mark on those two sticks. They then compared sticks to see that no two had marks alike. They then bundled the sticks together, each one keeping the duplicate. The rest in the bundle were sent on to the Whitchitas in charge of a runner The Whitchitas in receiving these sticks knew the Pawnees were near The sticks were divided out among their men who had ponies to make as gifts to their coming guests.⁴¹

Also great preparations were made for the reunion of the two tribes after many years separation. When the Pawnees arrived, there rose a great and exciting time. In our words now would say, "There was sure



The adults in this Pawnee family would have been children during the march from Nebraska to the Indian Territory in 1874 and 1875 (Courtesy OHS).

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When the Pawnee arrived in the Indian Territory, they were greeted by their Wichita kinsmen (left) who lived in grass lodges and teepees (opposite page) (Courtesy OHS).

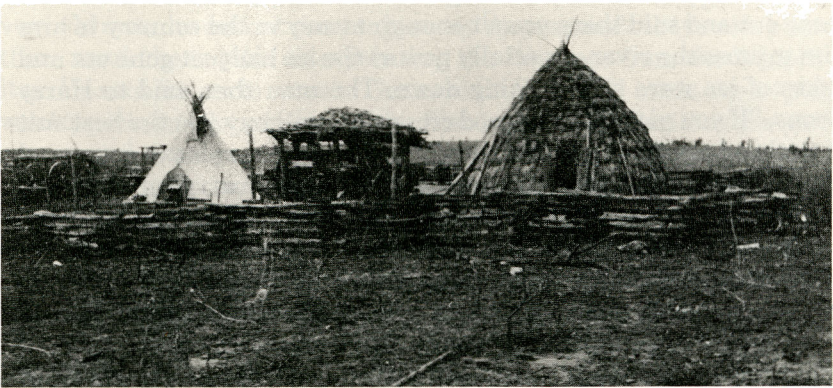
some thing doing.” For about a week this jollification lasted, consisting of drinking, horse riding, foot racing, and all other sports peculiar to Indians.

During this time sticks were compared and matched. The Wichita finding the Pawnee with the stick that matched his made him a gift of a pony. Of course, other gifts were made, the squaws giving the Pawnee women shawls, blankets, and other things. Years before when together they talked the same language, but after years of separation it had become some different. Yet they were able to understand each other quite well. I witnessed several of their races, including horse and foot races. One foot race I remember in particular was a distance of about 7 miles. About 50 Pawnee and Whitchita agency men took part in it. They made a purse of many things, including revolvers, blankets, moccasins, and other articles. The winner in the race rec'd this as reward. I did not follow the race, but some army officers, from a military camp stationed at this agency, followed on horse back the runners thru the entire course. This race was won by a Pawnee about 25 yrs. old.

I should have mentioned here before that when I arrived at the Whitchita I turned the Pawnees over to the agent here and he had full charge of them. The agent here at this time was a Quaker by the name

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of Johnathan Richards. My orders were to wait here until the Pawnee agent, William Burgess, and a man from the department should arrive. Mr Burgess arrived in a few days. We waited about two weeks until the other man arrived.⁴² This man had been to the churches and had made arrangements for the purchase of the land to be the future home of the Pawnee. Of course, the land was to meet with the approval of Pawnee representatives who were going to look over the land. After his arrival here in a few days a party [was] composed [of] Mr Burgess and the man from Washington, Mr Alexander, and myself, and a few Pawnee. As this country was not familiar to any of us, a scout was furnished from the military camp to guide us. So we started out on horse back and with our wagon to carry necessities for camp-



ing. In a few days we arrived at Bear Creek, and there the land was inspected and found to be satisfactory to the Pawnees. The site for the agency was located on Bear Creek which place is the present agency to-day Necessary papers were signed and everything made final.⁴³

I had been very anxious to go back home as I had been gone nearly five months and letters from home had brought me the news that I was the father of a son born north of Albion [Boone County, Nebraska]. I was more than anxious to go back and see my wife and new baby⁴⁴

We turned the Pawnee Indians back to return to the rest of the tribe at the Whitchita agency Arrangements were made for Mr Alexander, Harry Coons, and myself to accompany Mr Burgess and the Washington man as far as Coffeerville [Coffeyville, Kansas], the nearest railroad town, a distance of 105 from the location of the Pawnee agency At Coffeerville freight and men were to be hired to take the

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necessary provisions purchased back to the new agency Mr Alexander, Harry Coons, and myself were to supervise the starting of the new agency while Mr Burgess and the department man to return to Nebr and Wash., respectively

The Arkansas had to be crossed to reach Coffeeville, we to cross it at a point 7 miles from the new site for the agency There were no bridges, and we had to ford. The scout from the camp was still with us and went as far as the crossing of this river As the Arkansas river was treacherous with quick sand, a suitable place to cross had to be carefully selected. It takes a man familiar with the western streams to find a place void of quicksand. The man from Wash. ordered this scout to pick us out a suitable crossing. This he attempted to do. He rode in a ways. His horse miring down in the quick sand he at once came out and said there wasn't enough money in the country to hire him to cross the river, especially now as the ice had just gone out and cakes of ice were still floating down. The man then said to Harry Coons, "If you pick us out a good crossing, I will buy you the best suit of clothes I can find in Coffeeville." He was very anxious to get a good crossing so as not to get the papers wet that he was carrying back with the Pawnee agreement for the new land. Harry Coons made a trial, but he too gave it up and refused to cross. I was sure I could find a crossing but determined to find it on foot and not horse back. I went to the wagon, put on some old clothes, and told the man that I would find a crossing. He said, "If you can do this and we can cross without damaging these papers, I will add to the offer of a new suit clothes a 30 days furlough to go home and see your wife and baby."⁴⁵ The Arkansas River was wide, shallow By picking carefully the very deepest places would not exceed five or six feet. Occasionally there were sand bars. I cut some willow sticks and waded in. When ever I came to a sand bar, I stuck in a willow This served as markers for a crossing. By being most careful I succeeded in crossing.

As the river was very cold, I ran afterward to warm myself before I returned back over When I recrossed, they had built a good warm fire while I was in the water As I was pretty numb and cold, I took off my wet clothes. They wrapped me in a buffalo robe and put me near the fire. The man also took from his grip an untouched bottle of whisky He gave me a few mouthfuls of this which also helped to warm me and protect me against taking cold. In a few minutes I was very comfortable. In a short time I was dressed. We made the crossing in safety and with no trouble.

Just across the river was the Osage Indian reservation and a

subagency called the Bill Hill Joe Camp.⁴⁶ Here we found quarters for the night. From there on we had a good road to Coffeerville, as this was the road used by freighters hauling goods to this agency. The next night we reached Osage agency proper. Here we staid for the night. The next night we camped. The following day at noon we reached Coffeerville.

Mr Alexander being a very capable man was placed in charge of taking provisions and men back to start the new agency. I most joyously started for home in pocation of a new suit. I reached home and found my wife and baby all right and was only in the middle of my vacation when Mr Burgess rec'd a message stating that either he would have to send me or else go himself and take the Pawnees from the Whitchita agency to their new quarters. As Mr Burgess was a very old man, he did not want to assume the responsibility as he knew there would be trouble in seperating the Pawnees from the Whitchitas. He sent for me to come to Genoa and told me if I made the trip he would make me the promise of the first house to [be] built at the new agency so I could move my family down then too. I agreed to do this providing I could have a man to go with me as it was a long ways from the Whitchitas to the new agency. I did not care to make the trip alone thru an unsettled country. He allowed me to take a man of my own choice. I chose C. R. Shaw who later married my wife's siter.⁴⁷ Mr Burgess also hired a few other men to accompany me down and work at building up the new agency. They were Clint Kilborne, Pat Matthews, H. F. Snyder, Mr Getshell, all of Boone Co.⁴⁸

We went by train as far as Coffeerville. Then I hired freighters and bo't provisions and started out for the new agency, a distance of 105 miles. On reaching the Arkansas river a ford had to be selected. I proceeded in the same way as I did before in selecting the ford and taking off my clothes laid them by the wheel of the wagon instructing Clint Kilborne to watch them. I knew we were close to the Sub agency of the Osages. Indians were liable to be close around and I had \$100 in my pocket in a purse. I picked out a suitable ford. When I returned for my clothes, a large Indian Buck stood by the wagon with his blanket around close up around him. Mr Kilborne said to me, "I don't know what this Indian was about, but he has been meddling with your clothes." I looked through my pockets and found my money gone. I then grabbed hold of the Indian's blanket. In loosening his hold my pocket book fell at his feet.

Being only seven miles from our destination we reached it the same day. I found upon reaching the agency that Mr Alexander, Harry

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Coons, and their workmen sent down from Kan. and constructed some log cabins and bunk houses.

In a day or two Harry Coons, C. R. Shaw, and myself started out on horse back across country packing provisions on a extra horse. The distance we covered was pushing 150 miles. The only difficulty we found was the high water in the stream we had to cross. We built rafts of dry cotton wood limbs tied together with willows. In these we placed our guns, ammuniton, and provisions. Then we would grab hold and float across the river behind this. It was impossible to go



Perhaps thanking the Great Spirit for a safe journey, these Pawnee offered prayers in their new homeland (Courtesy Kansas State Historical Society).

straight across, so we would drift down with the current until we could strike a landing. We [would] there then take our things off the raft and walk back up the stream until opposite our horses. Then we would swim across the river, force our horses in the water, and grab hold of their tails. We would have some difficulty in getting the horse in the water, but when once in they would make for the opposite bank. We were about a week in making this trip.

The trouble I had expected to encounter developed, the Pawnees refusing to leave; the Wichitas, who wanted the Pawnees to remain with them, also put in a protest. After counsiling and parleying with them for two days three of the bands, the Skeedees, the Kit-ka-hai's, and the Pit-i-hi-rats, consented to go. Big Spotted Horse, chief of the Chouia band and who I counsiled with, absolutely refused to go. My

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instructions from the government had been if I could not get them to go peaceably to call on military aid as last resort. After talking and pleading with Spotted Horse and also threatening him with military aid I left about the middle of the afternoon and told him I was going to consult the military officer at the agency I talked with the officer He instructed me to return and tell Spotted Horse that if he wasn't ready to move his band the next m'ng that he would come down there with cavalry and tie him to his pony He would remain that way until he reached the new agency I was instructed to report back to the officer what effect argument would make on him. After talking to him about an hour he still refused. I told him I would have to report this to the officer I would not argue any more with him but would let the officer carry out his plans. These arguments were always carried on in a friendly manner as he was not a cross, ugly Indian. I started out in the moonlight to report this to the officer at the agency, a distance of about a mile. After riding a short distance I heard Spotted Horse coming in a gallop behind me and singing one of his favorite songs. I knew it was him by his voice. I stopped, and he called out to me "Buck-shau-ri-chee-ru" (meaning Curly Head), wait." He then told me to tell the officer, "I have talked with my band, and they are willing to go." He also wanted me after reporting to the officer to return and join them in a feast, which I did. The feast lasted until midnight. Everything was settled in a friendly and peaceably way, we all joining in a smoke.

Johnathan Richard, agent of the Whitchitas, had been given instructions from the government to furnish one hundred head of Texas cattle for meat for our journey Texas cattle were the only available cattle in this day We left the next day about noon with the 1400 Pawnees driving the 100 head of cattle ahead of them. These Texas cattle not being accustomed to Indians we had a hard time driving them. We made about 10 miles the first day and at night butchered 15 head. The remaining had to be surrounded by Indian guards as we had no corral. In the night the cattle stampeded during a rain and wind storm. We had quite a time keeping them. They became so unmanageable they run down thru the camp tearing down the tents and making a big commotion. It being such a bad, wild, and dark night that we lost track of them. In the morning we did not have a one left. The next day was spent in a fruitless search. No cattle were found. However they found one cow and drove her into camp, but she was so mad and chased every Indian and child until I finally went into my tent, took my rifle, and shot her Thus 84 head cattle were lost to

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the Indians. We were fortunate in killing lots of wild turkey, deer, and antelope. We reached our destination without suffering for food.

The rivers that were so high when we went were down when we came back, so we had no trouble in crossing them. We arrived at the new agency some time in the fore part of June.⁴⁹ I found that a good many workmen had been sent to the new agency and also a military man, General Caterson, to act as sub agent.⁵⁰ A good many log buildings had been put up in my absence, but they had no eating place so they ate out under a tree and also slept out of doors. A man by the name of Baker and his wife and sister had charge of the cooking.⁵¹ A agent's office was erected and saw mill sent down. Several yokes of oxen and logs wagons had been purchased and sent down. Men were engaged in chopping logs which were loaded in wagons, taking several yoke of oxen to pull one wagon into the saw mill.

The Pawnees put up their tents along Bear Creek. Gen. Caterson and myself held counsil with the Indians and told them that they would have to build lodges and houses for winter quarters as this was to be their permanent home. Provisions would also be supplied for them, freighted to them by lines from Coffeeville. A big com[missary]. was under construction to hold these provisions.

Before they could draw their rations, it would be necessary to take the census of the entire tribe. This was all found to be satisfactory to



Seen here in 1896 on their new reservation (left and opposite page), the Pawnee continued their communal lifeway until allotment (Courtesy OHS).

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the Indians. My first task was to take the census. It was taken in this manner I would give a card to the head of each family On this was his name and the number of wives and children. This card he had to present when he wanted rations. [Insert written in the margin reads "The Indians would double up and cheat."]

I was several days in completing this census. It was taken by bands. The first band was the Chouia, second was Kit-ka-haus, the third the Pit-a-he-rats, and last the Skeedee whose chief was my friend, Captain Chief. The Skeedee band being last sort of peeved Captain Chief, so when I went to take their census, he had guests, the Osage Indians.



He told me he could not have the census taken at this time. So I left him and reported this to Gen. Caterson.

In a few days he sent Harry Coons, the interpreter, out there and asked Captain Chief if he was now ready to have the census taken. He sent back a rather surly answer saying that when he got ready to have the census taken he would let him know General Caterson being a military man and very stern was pretty much riled by such conduct, so he sent for me and told me this word Captain Chief had sent back. He then instructed me not to go near there again. He would handle him. He said it would soon be time for the rations to [be] given out. As Captain Chief would have no card, he could not get his rations. He then said, "If he wants any rations, he will have to have his band up in front of my office."

True to his word, when Captain Chief was ready, he sent him a

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runner saying they could take the census. Gen. Caterson sent back word for Captain Chief to appear at this office. In a short time the chief appeared at the office. Gen. Caterson informed him that he must line up his tribe in front of the office so the census could be taken and cards issued to them. He still be[ing] in a sulky mood left the office without saying what he would do.

During this time the com. was completed and filled with goods, cons[isting]. of flour, sugar, coffee, bacon, salt, and soda. Gen. Cater-son he knew meant business with him, so one morning bright and early he appeared in front of the office with his tribe's band. The reason for asking that the entire band was shown was that they would double up on us and run more in on us if they could and which was done even under the most careful watching. Gen. Caterson instructed to start at the end of the line and bring Captain Chief last as he stood, of course, at the head of the line. By humiliating Captain Chief in this manner Gen. Caterson knew he could not give him any harder or more severe punishment. True to his good nature, which always showed uppermost at any trouble, he gave in very gracefully. The trouble was forgotten.⁵²

The Indian rations were bid by contract from R. C. Crowel & Co. of Kansas City, which firm had contracts with the government to supply these rations and also cattle.⁵³ These cattle were purchased in Texas in large droves of several thousand head. As this firm had contracts to furnish all the agencies in the territory, they would start with the tribes furthest south, the Ki-iwas and Kamanchees coming first. From there they would deliver the cattle to the Whitchitas, then Cheyennes and Arapahoes, then the Sax-an-foxes [Sac-Fox], and from them to the Pawnees.

The first delivery to the Pawnees was about the middle of June, 1875. This first delivery of cattle to the Pawnees was under difficulty. The Osage agency was located about 45 miles east of the Pawnees. These Osages were a bad tribe of Indians and were not very friendly toward the Pawnees, all tho they had never come to clashes. As the men drew near the Pawnee agency with the cattle probably about 10 miles out, a bunch of Osages undertook to stampede their cattle. This occurred late in the afternoon. The man in charge of the cattle sent in a cowboy and said they would have to have aid as the Osages were trying to stampede the cattle. Gen. Caterson at once called in all the workmen and some of the Pawnee warriors. Placing me in charge we mounted and with fire arms went to the scene of commotion. We reached the place of trouble after dark. The Osages had stopped there

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then. Early in the morning they stopped again, but finding so many of us there to help they quit and went away

On that same day five hundred head of cattle were delivered to the Pawnee agency. As there were no scales for weighing these cattle, the weights had to be estimated. The following day a number of cattle were shut in on the prairie and butchered. Each tribe rec'd their allotment. Every two weeks there was a slaughter of cattle, the Indians taking charge of the carcasses and further tending to the meat.

I was placed in charge of the out side work with the assistance of Mr Alexander. The work was to chop and haul the logs for log houses. True to his word Mr Burgess informed Gen. Caterson that I was to have the first house completed. It was a three roomed house which we considered at three rooms equal to a seven or eight room house now. There were four large bunk houses put up for sleeping quarters for the men.

As everything coming to the agency had to come across the Arkansas River, we also built a ferry boat seven miles east of the agency. When the ferry boat was completed, an old man by the name of Getchell who had been once a sailor was put in charge. This man had



Photographed at Caney, Kansas, in 1877 these Pawnee (background) probably were paid to transport supplies to their reservation (Courtesy Kansas State Historical Society).

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an assistant, and a log house was put up for their accommodations. Of course, in a large bunch of men this way was more or less profanity Gen. C. being of a religious notion had put up a sign in the agency reading "No swearing allowed." This man Getchell being a very profane man happened up to the agency one evening and meeting Gen. C. under the sign said "Good evening, General. What in H - have you got up there." He said it in his jolly way, and some of the other men heard it. That night some of the men wrote under the sign "Getchell excepted."

The Osages caused us more or less trouble. It was their custom, when ever a prominent one of them died, for a number of them to start out on a moaning [mourning] party, the first person they met out side of their own tribe to kill and scalp and bring the scalp back into camp.⁵⁴ One day Clint Kilborn and myself started over to the ferry boat riding in a wagon. An Osage Indian came up behind us on horseback and yelled and pulled a revolver on us. We were also armed, I having a Winchester rifle laying cross my lap. He wheeled around and went up on a hill and commenced shooting his revolver. Of course the bullets did not come so very close at the distance he was. I laid my rifle across the wheel of the wagon and took a shot at him. I did not know whether I hit him or not, but Mr Kilborne said he saw him fall.

A few days afterward Agent Gibbon of the Osages sent word over to Gen. C. that there would be trouble as one of his employees had shot an Osage Indian.⁵⁵ Consequently a moaning party was started for this dead Osage. The party was headed by an Osage Indian called Dr Jim and who could talk good English. He had a fine voice like a woman's. They came and camped close to our agency on Bear Creek staying several days. Every day while camped there this Dr Jim would come up and try and get Gen. C. to issue them some rations from the comm. Of course, Gen. C. refused him this. He told him that the Osages were planning on a certain day to come by and break open the comm. and help themselves.

On the day they were to arrive Gen. C. called in the white employees and about 100 Pawnees and lined them well around up in front of the comm. The Osages came up and stopped a little ways off. Gen. C. went out with some more men and told this Dr Jim if they didn't leave we would turn loose on them. They came to his terms and left proceeding west on their journey. About a week later they returned very peacably through our agency. Some of the men told me they talked to Dr Jim. They asked him if they got a scalp. His reply

was "We met a negro on the trail." Of course, we all felt sure they had scalped the negro.

We also broke up 300 A[cre]s. of sod.⁵⁶ This was all planted to watermelons which proved to be a wonderful crop, the Indians having all the melons they wanted to eat and called them good medicine. They had this idea when things tasted good to them they called them medicine. Big Spotted Horse who I described before ate supper one night at our house. My wife had made gingerbread. Spotted Horse ate a good deal of it with great relish. That same night along about midnight we heard a noise in the house. I got up, lighted a lamp, and found Spotted Horse in the house. I asked him what he wanted. He said he wanted to talk with my wife and find out how she made that medicine bread so he could tell his wife and she could make it for him.

Also the same fall there was an abundance of wild turkey, wild duck, and prairie chicken. Of course, the Indians got their share of these. The mess house was on the banks of Bear Creek. The refuse from the kitchen was thrown out the back window, some of it laying on the banks of the creek. It was here that the turkeys would come up and feed. Just before Xmas Gen. C. shot a turkey he claimed weighed 24 lbs.

Although there was a large herd of cattle always around, we had no milk to use. One night at supper some one made the remark to the cattle herder (King Berry by name) that he tho't it funny he couldn't rope one of those cows and milk her⁵⁷ The herder said he could do that. One of the other men took up the remark and said he would bet the cigars that he couldn't milk one of those wild cows. King Berry took him up on his bet, went out, roped one of the cows, and tied her to a tree. The next morning he came in with a small am't of milk in a pail, and said, "Here is your milk you wanted for your coffee." That was in the bet that he had to bring the milk in for evidence that he had really milked the cow. However when we started to use the milk, he said, "I don't believe I would use that milk for I don't think it is good." We found out afterwards that the cow had broke her neck and he milked her after she died. However he won his bet and got his cigars.

The licensed trader, Stacey Matlack, had put up a large log store and filled it with mdse [merchandise] of all kinds which added much to [left blank].⁵⁸ One of the trading points was in Arkansas City, Cowl[e]y Co., Kan., which was located about 100 mi. north of our agency. We would at this place buy from the farmers grain, cattle, and horses, hauling the grain over land back to the agency. This would take about a week to make the trip. The reason we were on this

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trip was that we would have to ford the Arkansas River as we had no ferry between here and the agency. One reason for not going to Coffeerville where we had a ferry for crossing was on acc't of our enmity with the Osages. They made it so disagreeable for us passing through. Also it was dangerous. Even then, when we went the other way, the Osages would cause trouble. I would take about ten teams with a driver for each team. We would take a tent and camp on the way. One night the Osages followed us on the trail and tantalized us by firing into our tent.

My log house being finished on the second day of July I started for Coffeerville where I was to meet my wife and young baby, a few months old. I went in a covered ambulance drawn by four mules. Harry Coons accompanied me on this trip. On the 5th day of July in the afternoon I arrived at Coffeerville. Coffeerville was in Montgomery Co., was not a very large place at this time, and was considered a pretty tough place, it being a frontier town and a stopping place for a great many outlaws. We stopped that night at a hotel that was run by an old gentleman by the name of Coles. I told him I had come to meet my family which I expected the next day. He tho't it was a pretty tough place to bring a woman and child. "We have a dead man for breakfast time about every morning," he said.

The next day my wife arrived in company with William Bishop and wife. Mr. Bishop was to be clerk at Mr. Matlack's trading post.⁵⁹ That night we stayed at the same hotel. My wife not sleeping very well woke me up saying that she had heard a shot and wondered what it



After allotment, some Pawnee such as George Grover (above) and Eva Cummings (opposite page) became successful farmers (Courtesy OHS).

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was. I told her, "I think it was some young folks having a good time," but in the morning I discovered that a man had been shot and had died under our bedroom window

My wife related to me about a experience she had coming down to Coffeeville. I had left \$100 with her which she was bringing down with her Her attentions were centered so much in the care of her baby that when she got off the train at Kansas City to change for Coffeeville she had forgotten her money under her pillow in the berth where she had put it for safety She told Mr Bishop at once of her



plight. He [had] the railroad officials telegraph ahead. An honest colored porter had found [missing] the next train back but [missing] much to her relief.

At Coffeeville [missing] purchased some necessary [missing] for housekeeping that we tho's we couldn't procure at the agency Among some of them was a set of Rogers B[rothers]. silver spoons at a cost of \$3.00. Three spoons are in our home yet, a relic of past days. The next day our party of five and baby started for the agency, pitching our tent along the way, the women and baby occupy the tent and the men sleeping outside. It took us about three days to reach the agency, no incident worth mentioning happening.

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We at once set up housekeeping. Although our home was humble, it served good to have some thing good to eat and a clean home to take [illegible] our household effects. We had forgot to purchase a broom. As this was a necessary article, we had to resort to something home made. We would make a broom out of brush. As this would not last only one day, a new one had to [be] made every morning.

Our baby boy being only white baby at the agency he was exceedingly popular with both the men and the few women. King Berry must have had the baby in mind too as he bro't over a spotted cow to supply us milk and which added very much to our comfort. In his herd of cattle he had come across a gentle cow with a young calf by her side [missing] to find a gentle cow [missing] one had undoubtedly been milked by someone before. He gave me the cow and calf. I in turn gave the calf to an Indian and kept the cow

The squaws caused my wife much discomfort by peering in the window and putting their dirty faces against her clean windows. Some times every window pain would reveal a face. They always wanted to trade something. They would come up with a piece of calico holding it and would say "Swap, swap." They would exchange the calico for anything they could eat and any old grease in which they could fry their bread. One squaw my wife hired to wash for her Always when she had finished our washing, she would take off the long loose sack she wore, wash it, put it right back on wet, and let it dry on her self. This same squaw asked my wife, when we left there again, if she could have the little puppy that belonged to our baby Also another squaw had made the same request. So when we left we gave the dog to the one squaw A heated quarrel ensued. To pacify them my wife gave the other squaw the family cat.

[Insert] In May, 1876, I resigned my commission because of the ill health of both myself and wife. The southern climate did not agree with us. Our Agent supplied a Government hack and driver to take us to Coffeeville, a distance of a hundred and twenty miles to the nearest railroad station. On this trip we had some trouble the first night as a windstorm blew our hack over and caused several other mishaps of a similar nature, but these were of a minor importance when compared with the pleasure of returning to our old home at Genoa, Nebraska, where we have since resided.⁶⁰

ENDNOTES

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³⁷ Brave Chief (Nesharu Rahikuts), a Kitkahahki chief, remained a prominent leader in later years on the Oklahoma reservation. Hyde, *The Pawnee Indians*, 346.

³⁸ Medicine Arrow, sometimes called Medicine Water, had recently broken away from the Cheyenne and Arapaho Agency: his party was heading north to join other hostiles. He had led war parties of Cheyenne in 1874, one of which had killed or captured all the members of the John German family along the Smoky Hill River (see note 40). Father Peter John Powell, *People of the Sacred Mountain. A History of the Northern Cheyenne Chiefs and Warrior Societies, 1830–1879* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1981), 862, 863, 868.

³⁹ This military camp near the Cheyenne and Arapaho Agency was commanded by Lt. Colonel Thomas H. Neill, 6th Cavalry who had been a major general of volunteer troops during the Civil War. Neill had requested two companies of 10th Cavalry from Fort Sill on February 18, 1875. He arrested Medicine Arrow after the March 6 surrender at the agency of the last (over 1,000 members) of the warring Cheyenne tribe. Francis B. Heitman, *Historical Register and Dictionary of the United States Army* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1903), 742; Joe F Taylor editor, "The Indian Campaign on the Staked Plains, 1874–1875: Military Correspondence from War Department Adjutant General's Office, File 2815-1874," *Panhandle-Plains Historical Review*, 34 (Canyon, Texas: Panhandle-Plains Historical Society, 1961).

⁴⁰ Williamson has confused two events here. The rescue of the German girls came as a result of General Nelson A. Miles's 1874 expedition against southern Plains tribes. In 1869 Custer had rescued two white women, a Mrs. Morgan and Miss White. It was in the Cheyenne camp of Medicine Arrow, the same man Williamson met five years later where these two women captives were held. Mrs. Frank C. Montgomery "Fort Wallace and Its Relation to the Frontier" *Collections of the Kansas State Historical Society*, 17 (1926–1928), 257–268; General George Armstrong Custer *My Life on the Plains*, (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1962), 359, 371–375.

⁴¹ Examples of gift-giving between the two tribes are given in Blaine, *op. cit.*

⁴² Burgess left the Pawnee Agency on November 23, 1874, according to a letter of November 30, 1874, from George F Howell to Edward P Smith. "Letters Received," *National Archives Microfilm*, Roll 663. The identity of the "man from the department" is unknown.

⁴³ The inspection party included twelve Pawnees from the four bands to serve as representatives for the whole tribe. Letter of March 9, 1875, from William Burgess to Edward P Smith, "Letters Received," *National Archives Microfilm*, Roll 663. A copy of the reservation agreement accompanies this letter.

⁴⁴ The names of Williamson's wife and son were Martha C. Atwood and Harry Vernon Williamson. Genoa (Nebraska) *Leader-Times*, March 18, 1927.

⁴⁵ According to the 1902 Blackman interview of Williamson, it was Burgess who did not want papers wet and offered Williamson the furlough. Also, no "Washington man" appears as a witness to the reservation agreement, although Burgess, Williamson, and Alexander do. Possibly since Williamson may have considered the river crossing incident unflattering toward Burgess, he may have invented a mythical man from Washington.

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⁴⁶ Big Hill Joe was the recognized leader of the Osage group known as the Big Hills. John Joseph Mathews, *The Osages: Children of the Middle Waters* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1961), 671–675, 698.

⁴⁷ Shaw's activities at the new agency are told in "Prepared Reservation for Pawnees Years Ago," *Guide Rock* (Nebraska) *Signal*, August 5, 1926.

⁴⁸ These four men are listed as A. C. Kilborn, P. H. Mathews, H. F. Snider and Alonzo H. Getchell. List of temporary employees at the Pawnee Agency Indian Territory, under special orders, to open up new Reservation, and prepare it for the occupation of the Pawnee Indians, 1875–1876, "Letters Received by the Office of Indian Affairs, Pawnee Agency 1876," *National Archives Microfilm Publications No. 234* (Washington: National Archives, 1956), Roll 664.

⁴⁹ The Pawnees left the Wichita Agency in late June, 1875. *Annual Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, 1875*, 288.

⁵⁰ The subagent was Robert Francis Catterson who had been a brigadier general in the 97th Indiana Infantry Heitman, *Historical Register* 291.

⁵¹ Joseph N. Baker was the superintendent of the mess house. List of temporary employees, "Letters Received," *National Archives Microfilm*, Roll 664.

⁵² The first full count taken in 1876 of the reunited Pawnee tribe in Indian Territory totalled 2,026. *Annual Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, 1876* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1876), 210.

⁵³ R. C. Crowell and Co. of Kansas City represented the Thomas Lanigan ring, the dominant and unscrupulous beef contractor to the Indian Territory agencies. Milner, *With Good Intentions*, 97–98.

⁵⁴ Witnessing an Osage mourning party was a memorable event. Charles Chapin, who also went to the new Pawnee Agency from Nebraska for employment, remembered one. Charles Chapin, "Removal of Pawnee and Peace with Their Neighbors," *Nebraska History*, 26 (January–March, 1945), 43–48.

⁵⁵ Isaac T. Gibson was the Osage agent. *Annual Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, 1875*, 281.

⁵⁶ According to the agent's annual report, 300 acres were broken and squashes, pumpkins, beans, melons, corn, peas, and other vegetables planted. *Annual Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, 1875*, 332.

⁵⁷ King Berry is listed as herd overseer on the list of temporary employees. "Letters Received," *National Archives Microfilm*, Roll 664. Along with his brother Thomas Embassy Berry, he managed a trading store on the Pawnee Reservation in 1877. R. L. Williams, "Necrology—George Madison Berry, 1858–1939," *The Chronicles of Oklahoma*, 17 (March, 1939), 126.

⁵⁸ Stacy Matlack became the licensed trader to the Pawnee in 1873 and followed them to Indian Territory. His license was revoked by the Commissioner of Indian Affairs in 1878. Milner *With Good Intentions*, 111.

⁵⁹ Likewise, William Bishop had followed the Pawnees from their Nebraska agency to their new one. Milner, *With Good Intentions*, 213.

⁶⁰ Blackman, "The Story of the Pawnee's Removal South," 42. In fondly remembering the Pawnee, Williamson said: "I count many of these unfortunates among my truest and best friends, and these exciting, active days spent with them I look back to as some of the happiest I ever knew. Their friendship, if they gave it, was true blue; they would never desert a friend or deceive them on any account. I learned to appreciate their sterling worth of character and have no patience with those who abuse the character of the Pawnees." Blackman, "Removal of Pawnees to Oklahoma, 1874," 45.