

2/10/20

Attachment 11

Application for Network to Freedom, Table Rock Cemetery

For Block S6, Annotated Bibliography

THE HOWE AND PEPOON FAMILIES

Little discussion is needed of the bibliography because two family authored books (available on Amazon) provide solid information:

(1) Saylor, Douglas. *Fighting for the Cause, Writing for the Cause. The Howes and Pepoons on Abolition, Education, Suffrage, and Temperance,* 2010. ISBN 978-0-557-76649-9.

(2) Saylor, Helen Howe, *A Home in the Heartland*, 2011, ISBN 978-1-257-82834-0

In each, original journals and letters are transcribed, discussed, assessed, and illuminated by external information that is provided. The writing is concise yet lyrical and the source material is consistently given. Every conceivable source of information is gathered within the covers of these two books.

TABLE ROCK AS AN UNDERGROUND RAILROAD STATION

Some sources merely provide background information. This would include the article about the 1853 fugitive slave case in Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania¹; the 1855 letter from C. W. Giddings to Rev. James Griffing (brother-in-law of C. W. Giddings), in which Giddings writes that he would like to bring settlers “of the right stamp” to a home in the west and inquires about whether Kansas may become

¹ Kashatus, William C., *Pennsylvania Heritage*, “An Immortal Splendor; Wilkes-Barre’s Fugitive Slave Case of 1853,” Spring 2008, pp. 24-31, available at <http://www.phmc.state.pa.us/portal/communities/pa-heritage/files/immortal-splendor.pdf>

a free state ²; and the Methodist Episcopal church, which includes Territorial times and transcribes two 1860 anti-slavery resolutions at a Kansas-Nebraska Conference meeting, reflecting the general tenor of Methodists in the Territory.³

There are other bits of information in publications of 1882 and 1889 that are generally acceptable sources (1) A. T. Andreas, *History of the State of Nebraska*, (Chicago, IL: The Western Historical Company, 1882); and (2) *Portrait and Biographical Album of Johnson and Pawnee Counties, Nebraska* (Chicago, IL: Chapman Brothers, 1889). Both are vanity presses of the sort common in those days, the latter more than the former, both rely heavily on local accounts, but both preserve considerable material for the modern historian to chew on.

There is also a 2016 history self-published by the Table Rock Historical Society that is particularly helpful for general history about Table Rock – Doralyn Steiner Cheney, *Stories of Early Settlers Along the Nemaha* (Table Rock, NE: Table Rock Historical Society, 2016), available online at <https://www.tablerockhistoricalsociety.com/network-to-freedom.html>, last visited February 10, 2020. Cheney consistently cites her sources for each fact, discusses inconsistencies, brings in illuminating material, and gathers in about every conceivable source of information about Table Rock. She does not discuss the Underground Railroad, but the background narrative that she provides is invaluable.

Two significant primary sources were relied upon for the stories about the Underground Railroad activity in Table Rock, the account of Fannie Giddings Norris about her family's efforts, and accounts by Russell Hoadley Samson, a contemporary of those involved. There other sources as well, as discussed below.

(1) Primary source: Fannie Giddings Norris, as to the Giddings family

The source of Fannie's account is from an unpublished book – A. Gaylord Wilson, *A Short Biography Of The Life Of Fannie Clarissa Giddings* (1932).

² Private Letters: The Correspondence of Rev. James S. Griffing and J. Augusta Goodrich, accessed at <https://privatelettersjsg.wordpress.com/1854-1856-bleeding-kansas/families-of-the-right-stamp>.

³ Marquette, David, *A History of Nebraska Methodism: First Half-Century, 1854-1904*, Western Methodist Book Concern Press, Cincinnati, 1904.

This is a first-person account by Fannie Giddings Norris. In a brief forward, the author of this biography, married to one of Fannie's granddaughters, explains that the book is based on several conversations and interviews with Fannie during her 90th and 91st years, in 1931-2. The book is owned by multiple descendants. The copy used was provided by Elizabeth Wilkins of Virginia and is available online at <https://www.tablerockhistoricalsociety.com/network-to-freedom.html>, last visited February 10, 2020. Wilkins says that her mother Helen Norris Siemsen (one of Fannie's grandchildren) told her that Gaylord Wilson was very serious about the gathering of the memories.⁴ Knowing this and reading the book itself, the vessel for the memories appears to be trustworthy.

Fannie was about 17 when she arrived in Table Rock. She said that her father was the head of the local station. She described a specific event when the family sheltered four fugitives during cold winter weather for four days, providing warm beds in the "basement" and food in the kitchen. Friends then took their belongings to the mill in wagons, disguised as grain, while the fugitives themselves got to the edge of the town then followed in the creek bed to get to the mill themselves. She also said that there were other occasions as well.

The Underground Railroad events she described had to have taken place between her arrival in the Summer of 1858 and her marriage to Chauncey Norris in March 1860. She spoke of herself as a member of her family, not as a third-person observer. More importantly, she said that her husband was not friendly toward the cause of the fugitive slaves, so she was not speaking of her household with her husband. When Fannie's memories were written down, she was 90 years old.

⁴ The book is discussed in a December 15, 2019 email from Elizabeth Wilkins to Sharla Cerra of the Table Rock Historical Society. Wilkins says, in part:

"I have the bound copy of "A Short Biography of the life of Fannie Clarissa Giddings" written by A. Gaylord Wilson, Dec. 25, 1932. Fannie's daughter, Sue Norris Phillips' daughter Dorothy Phillips, was married to Arthur Gaylord Wilson. As I recall Mom's account - Gaylord took the occasion of writing the biography very seriously. He was a teacher at a Jr College & later Financial Mgr of schools in a city in CA. In the book the lead into the Railroad part of the story is slipped into the period after they returned from the reservation. CW & Chauncey's disagreements about helping the escapees would have been around the time of their courtship/marriage (1860)..."

Some of the great detail may have been lost, but sufficient information is present for at least one episode. Moreover, a contemporary of hers, Russell Samson, separately described another incident, as set forth below, and the two accounts have similar hallmarks, particularly that the fugitives were hidden in the Giddings home, in either the basement or cellar, presumably one and the same, that the fugitives were well armed, and that their immediate destination after the Giddings home was the mill on the Nemaha River, from where they were hidden in wagons for an overland trip east toward the Missouri River.

(2) Contemporary source: Russell Samson, as to the Giddings family and William Fellers

The primary source for Samson is Harrison, J. H., “Bits of Nebraska History,” *Nebraska State Journal*, July 22, 1900, page 4. This extensive article by former Table Rock resident Joel H. Harrison details the memories of Russell Hoadley Samson (not Sampson as cited in the article) about his early days in Nebraska. Samson, a settler of 1857, is buried in the Table Rock Cemetery. Harrison related a number of Samson’s memories and as to the Underground Railroad, Samson described an incident in Table Rock involving aid rendered to four freedom seekers by C. W. Giddings, William Fellers, and Newman Sanford of Table Rock. Three fugitives were hidden in the Giddings cellar for the day, and a storekeeper named Strickler got wind of it. Strickler enlisted some friends to help him get hold of the fugitives. The fugitives were reportedly willing and desirous that Strickler and friends come down to the cellar . However, while Strickler and the others plotted about get the job done, the fugitives were helped out a window and met at the edge of the town by William Fellers and another.

Samson’s memory has considerable detail, neither too much nor too little. He was a contemporary of those involved. Indeed, a look at the county land records show that his homestead abutted that of William Fellers. A review of the story, and a variety of other sources unrelated to this, will show that Samson was a born story teller with an ear for detail; in an unrelated incident five years after the Underground Railroad event he described, a series of complicated events led to the hanging of three horse thieves by Table Rock people. Samson’s memories were the sharpest and most consistent, and were corroborated by others and vice versa. That particular event involved many more people and much more time yet his story was straight. In this case, his credibility about this small gem of a narrative may well be illuminated by his sense of history and the retelling of it in other situations.

Moreover, Samson's story gave more detail to a comment that had earlier appeared in 1889, wherein he said that Giddings was involved with the Underground Railroad and that "one lots" was "very nearly captured." *Portrait and Biographical Album of Johnson and Pawnee Counties, Nebraska*, (Chicago, IL: Chapman Brothers, 1889), "Russell Samson," pages 558-560.

(3) A 1917 community celebration – an additional source as to Giddings family

One little newspaper article in 1917 describes a program at Table Rock a celebration of 50 years of Nebraska statehood with a dramatization of local events which showed four slaves transported on the 'underground railroad' from the Table Rock home of C. W. Giddings to the "Bob Muir station" at Brownville.⁵

4) Sources of information about Asa E. Heywood and John C. Wood

Asa E. Heywood reportedly acknowledged involvement in the Underground Railroad, as noted in an untitled 1894 news article. "A. E. Heywood of Table Rock was to town telling friends of the many negroes he had helped along on John Brown's underground railroad through Table Rock before the Civil War."⁶ No other record has been found as to either Heywood or Wood giving an account themselves.

However, their involvement was acknowledged during their lifetime, as in a 1912 news article in the Nebraska State Journal that noted that both men had been involved in the network and their families present at a whistle stop by a Senator campaigning for McKinley.⁷ And when Wood died, his work was recognized in his obituary, which said in part that Wood "conducted many a fugitive slave across Pawnee, Richardson, and Nemaha counties to Nemaha City, where they were slipped across the Missouri and into the hands of friendly people who would see

⁵ "Review State History," *Lincoln Journal Star*, March 5, 1917, page 5.

⁶ "Forty Years Ago," May 24, 1934, page 4 citing an article in the *Pawnee Republican* of May 24, 1894.

⁷ "Mark Hanna Stirs 'Em Up: His Trip Through Bryan's Stomping Ground One of Genuine Triumph: Every Stop Furnishes a Crowd to Hear the Great Republican Leader – Many Happy Hits Made During the Day," *Omaha Daily Bee*, October 21, 1900, page 5.

that they were sent across the line into Iowa.” It also mentioned that Heywood was the only surviving Nebraska conductor.⁸

Then, when Heywood was killed, he was noted by the Lincoln Journal Star as the last conductor.⁹ And the influential *Nebraska State Journal* carried multiple headlines, “Nebraska Pioneer is Dead. Last Survivor of Famous Underground Railroad; A. E. Heywod, Injured at Julesburg, Died Tuesday and Will be Buried in Nebraska.”¹⁰ A considerable amount of copy accompanied this news story:

“A. E. Heywood, the last survivor of the famous underground railway in Nebraska, who was injured in the railroad yards at Julesburg, Col., Monday, died yesterday morning. His son, Richard Heywood of Lincoln, left at once for Julesburg.

Mr. Heywood is well known in Nebraska, particularly in Table Rock, where he resided for many years, settling there before the War. He was a member of the famous band of early settlers insoutheastern nebraska and Kansas who formed the chain of frindly homes along which slaves were transported from the southern states to freedom in the north.

The common route was for the slaves to be gbrought in small apties through Kansas, into Richardson County frojrn Brown County [Kansas], then up into Nemaha County and across the Missouri at Nemaha City, a cross the extreme southeastern corner of missouri into Iowa.

The object of the route through Kansasa and Nebraska was to avoid the state of Missouri, which, as a whole, was pro-slavery. In northeastern Missouri, however, opposite Nemaha City, there was a chain of abolitionists leading into Iowa and furnishing a convenient route into the latter state.

Often the negroes were transported through Pawnee County further west, the choice between Pawnee and Richarson depending largely on the security of the one or other at the time the slaves werer being sent through.

⁸ *Nebraska State Journal*, untitled article, page 4. October 26, 1912. Same article in the *Pawnee Republican*, November 7, 1912, page 1.

⁹ “Last Conductor on Old Underground Railroad Run Down,” *Lincoln Journal Star*, November 12, 1912, evening edition, page 6. Same text in “Aged Conductor Killed,” *Beatrice Daily Sun*, page 1 (citing “Lincoln News”)

¹⁰ *Nebraska State Journal*, November 13, 1912, page 8

These were stirring times in this part of Nebraska and Mr. Heywood took an active part. Jayhawkers from Kansas were terrorizing the territory and adding to the difficulty in transporting the blacks to freedom. Parties of so-called South Carolina Rangers scoured the country on the lookout for the escaping slaves, and big rewards offered by slave owners made the occupation of transporting the negroes hazardous for John Brown and his conductors, of whom Mr. Heywood was one.

The body of Mr. Heywood will be taken to Table Rock today for burial. Mr. Heywood leaves, beside his son of this city, a daughter at Julesburg, with whom he had been making his home for the past few years.”

A 1920 article by Frank Harrison, “Stories of Old Nebraska,” cites the arrival of Giddings, saying that he and others “entered at once into the work of freeing slaves, and many times were the black men brought up from Missouri through Kansas to Table Rock, where they were secreted until it was safe to run them up across to Iowa.” He said that Giddings, Wood, and Heywood were “prominent in this “underground railroad...”¹¹

In an article in the Nebraska State Journal that same year, 1917 – 50 years of statehood revived an interest in history – also mentioned Wood and Heywood, as well as Robert V. Muir, saying that Table Rock was for many years “station on the underground railroad, the next station being Brownville, where the slaves who were hurried on to freedom, first crossed and stepped on free soil. If A. E. Heywood and J. C. Wood were still living, they could recount several trips they made to deliver the poor colored persons to “Massa Bob Muir” at Brownville.”¹²

(5) Sources as to the general fact that Table Rock was a station, by Robert V. Muir and others

¹¹ Frank Harrison, “Stories of Old Nebraska” *Pawnee Republican*, July 1, 1920, Page 4.

¹² “The Founding of Table Rock. Placed on the Map by a Colony from New York and Pennsylvania,” *Nebraska State Journal*, June 10, 1917, Sunday edition, page 49.

About the existence of a station at Table Rock, there is other corroborating material, most notably the statements of Robert V. Muir of Brownville.^{13 14} Muir said that Table Rock was occasionally used as a station. The “occasional” use does not minimize its value. Those who have been blown off course by a blizzard may be glad of refuge available off the intended path, and so would those who found themselves pushed west to Table Rock.

Muir, who helped found Table Rock but made his home at Brownville, was a staunch abolitionist, and a leading citizen of Brownville. His obituary attributed part of the founding of Brownville to him as well.¹⁵ Muir was an officer of the Nebraska Settlement Company, was the man who surveyed the town and prepared the plat filed at the court house, did business in Table Rock with the Table Rock mills, and his mother, Mary Muir, made her home in Table Rock with the David Butler family, who lived in the Table Rock area of the 1860 census. Muir was mentioned at times as one who himself worked for the Underground Railroad in the Brownville area. All in all, he was in a position to have good knowledge.

There is also a reference in the year of 1917, the 50th year of statehood, in a Nebraska State Journal article.¹⁶ This article collects the recollections of several old settlers, including those of J. W. Cassel, who grew up in Otoe County. Amongst other things, Cassel described how his parents prepared for a planned visit by Brown at their home near Nebraska City, Brown being expected to come through with freedom seekers in tow. The family was told to prepare for 17 and they did, but John Brown did not stop but rather forged on by. Cassel, not apparently related to Table Rock as some of the sources are, also cited Table Rock as a stop on the Underground Railroader.

¹³ Howe, Mary Pepoon, “Personal and Pertinent,” *Times-Tribune* (Scranton, Pennsylvania), August 9, 1912, page 6.

¹⁴ “Married Sixty Years Ago; Mr. and Mrs. R. V. Muir Celebrated Anniversary,” *Nebraska State Journal*, September 12, 1912, page 21.

¹⁵ “An Old Pioneer is Dead. R. V. Muir Helped Found City of Brownville. Came to Nebraska in 1856, Lived in Nebraska For Over 60 Years,” *Lincoln Journal Star*, February 6, 1917, page 7.

¹⁶ “Kept Light in Window,” *Nebraska State Journal*, June 10, 1917, Sunday edition, page 48.