

ARTIST MÖLLHAUSEN IN OKLAHOMA—1853

By Muriel H. Wright and George H. Shirk

In 1858 there was published in London the English translation of the *Journal*¹ of the artist who accompanied Lieutenant A. W. Whipple on the 1853 Pacific Railroad Survey across Oklahoma, the renowned Balduin Möllhausen. Notwithstanding its wide popularity at the time, the *Journal* has never been reprinted, and copies of the London edition are now extremely rare. There are extant three other journals or diaries of this same expedition and, to the credit of our own state, all have been edited and re-published in Oklahoma. The official Whipple *Report*² appeared as Volume III of the official government series of reports on the railroad explorations, and has been edited and re-published by Dr. Grant Foreman. Both the first hand field notes of Whipple and the diary of Lieutenant D. D. Stanley, Whipple's quartermaster, have been published in *The Chronicles of Oklahoma*. By presenting now the Möllhausen *Journal*, as far as is known, the cycle is complete.

Traveler, artist, author Heinrich Balduin Möllhausen was born near Bonn on the Rhine River, Germany, January 27, 1825, the son of the Prussian artillery officer, Heinrich Möllhausen and his wife, Elisabeth Baronesse von Falkenstein. Balduin's education at the Gymnasium of Bonn was cut short when he was fourteen because of family financial reverses. He tried farming in Pomerania, and later saw military service in the Austrian army during the Revolution of 1848. Wanderlust brought him to America in 1849, and he "led the roving life of a hunter" for nearly two years in the Kaskaskia River region in Illinois. When His Royal Highness, Duke Paul William of Wurttemberg organized and set out on a scientific

¹ Heinrich Baldwin Möllhausen, *Diary of a Journey from the Mississippi to the Coasts of the Pacific*, translated by Mrs. Percy Sinnett (London, 1858), 2 vols. This English publication was located in England by George H. Shirk, and is now in his Oklahoma Collection of historical volumes.

Special acknowledgment is due Mrs. H. E. Minshall, of Oklahoma City, who generously made and supplied the typescript of Möllhausen's *Journal* that appears here in *The Chronicles*.

² The official Whipple report was Vol. III, *Reports of Explorations and Surveys to Ascertain the Most Practicable and Economical Route for a Railroad From the Mississippi River to the Pacific Ocean*, 1853-54, 33rd Cong., 2d Sess., Senate Ex. Doc. No. 78. This was edited by Grant Foreman and published as *A Pathfinder in the Southwest* (Norman, 1941). Hereafter this will be referred to as *Pathfinder*; whereas the original Whipple Journals were edited and published by Muriel H. Wright and George H. Shirk, "The Journal of Lieutenant A. W. Whipple", *The Chronicles of Oklahoma*, Vol. XXVIII, No. 3, (Autumn 1949), p. 235, and which will be referred to hereafter as *Whipple*. The Stanley diary was published by Lona Sawyer, "Stanley Explores Oklahoma", *The Chronicles of Oklahoma*, Vol. XXII, No. 3 (Autumn 1944), p. 259.

expedition to the Rocky Mountains in the summer of 1851, he granted Möllhausen's special request to accompany him. They experienced many difficulties but reached the South Platte River region in what is now western Nebraska late in the fall when farther travel west was blocked by attacks and threats by war bands of Cheyenne and of Ogallala Sioux Indians. The Duke and Möllhausen were now forced to turn back, and set out alone through wild country for the Missouri River and Fort Kearney. They suffered in terrible blizzards, all their horses died and the Duke fell ill on the way. The two men had resigned themselves to death on November 25 when a mailstage from Fort Laramie came by. Only after long entreaties was room allowed for one more passenger on the already overcrowded stage. Which of the two was to be the passenger was left to the toss of a coin. Chance decided in favor of the Duke. Möllhausen was now left alone in the wilderness but after many weeks was finally rescued in a half crazed and starved condition by a friendly band of Oto Indians who took him to their village and nursed him back to health. Möllhausen later wrote of his Oto friends, "My loving memories of them shall be a priceless possession through all the years to come." Many months later, he joined the Duke in New Orleans.³

Back again in Germany early in 1853, Möllhausen met Baron Alexander von Humboldt who became his friend and patron. Möllhausen soon returned to America with letters of recommendation to join a United States government expedition to the west. He was assigned as topographer to the Pacific Railroad Survey that crossed Oklahoma under the command of Lieutenant A. W. Whipple, and was also commissioned by the Smithsonian Institution to serve as naturalist on this expedition, his talent as an artist having a large part in these appointments. It was on the Whipple Expedition in the summer of 1853 that Möllhausen discovered and collected many zoological specimens described later by noted scientists in their publications. He also made many beautiful sketches of scenes along the way, and took notes for the Oklahoma section of his *Journal* presented here in *The Chronicles*.

A year later in Berlin, Baron von Humboldt prevailed upon King Frederick William IV to appoint Möllhausen custodian of the libraries in the royal residences around Potsdam, a position that he held until his death in 1905. This fortunate appointment gave the young man comfort and leisure which he henceforth devoted to writing. He was one of the most prolific among German writers of

³ Brief accounts of their adventures on the 1851 Expedition written by "His Royal Highness, Duke Paul Wilhelm von Wurttemberg" and by "Mr. Moellhausen," the Duke's companion appear in Louis C. Butcher's "A Brief Biography of Prince Paul Wilhelm of Wurttemberg (1797-1860)," *New Mexico Historical Review*, Vol. XVII, No. 3 (July, 1942), pp. 181-225; and in Louis C. Butcher, ed., "An Account of Adventures in the Great American Desert by His Royal Highness, Duke Paul Wilhelm Von Wurttemberg," *ibid.*, No. 4 (October, 1942), pp. 294-344.

his time, the "last great exponent of transatlantic fiction in Germany," in which he always expressed his warm admiration for the American people and their achievements and institutions. Möllhausen produced in all 178 volumes, many of them novels based upon his thrilling adventures in America yet one of his finest works is his *Journal* first published in German. Barba, Möllhausen's biographer, has said of him: "In view of his splendid portrayals of Indian and pioneer life, and by virtue of the high character of his sea-novels, there is none who deserves so much the title of 'The German Cooper.'"⁴

Thus, Möllhausen early in life came under the influence of Baron Alexander von Humboldt, and the two remained at all times warm friends. Without doubt, much of Möllhausen's interest in the North American continent and his many books on American life were inspired by von Humboldt, the latter himself writing the "Preface" for the *Möllhausen Journal*. The contributions of von Humboldt to the development of North America are extensive, but are even more enriched by the inspiration that went into the *Möllhausen Journal*.

By the early 1850's the subject of a trans-continental railroad was one of great preoccupation with the American people. Each section of the country had its own special reason why such a project was of importance; but the clamor became one of great political significance. Senator T. H. Benton was a tireless advocate of the subject; and wrote or talked of the "Great National Highway" to all who would read or listen.

Congress responded by the act of March 3, 1853 (10 U. S. Stat. 219) and granted \$150,000 to the Secretary of War for use in making surveys of possible railroad routes from the Mississippi River to the Pacific.

Jefferson Davis was then Secretary of War. He decided upon three surveys; the northern route, to be surveyed by Isaac I. Stephens; the central route, intended as the direct line to San Francisco, by Captain J. W. Gunnison; and the southern route, the one across present Oklahoma from Fort Smith west, to be surveyed by Lieutenant A. W. Whipple. The Whipple party, although selected in Washington from among a great number of applicants, did not actually assemble complete until the expedition was ready to leave Fort Smith. Various members of the party joined Whipple at different stops along the road; and Möllhausen reached Little Rock ahead of Whipple.

The *Möllhausen Journal* is different in style than the Whipple and Stanley diaries; and combined together they provide today a

⁴"Heinrich Balduin Möllhausen," *Dictionary of American Biography* (New York, 1934), Vol. XIII, pp. 80-1.

most complete record of this famous expedition. Whipple naturally recorded technical matters and exact scientific observations, whereas Möllhausen devoted his attention to subjects of personal interest and to his impressions along the trip. Space limitations have required that here portions of the Oklahoma section be deleted, but in those instances the editors have limited their deletions to relatively unimportant effusions and reports of conversations that Möllhausen had with others along the route.

The Oklahoma Historical Society is extremely fortunate in owning a number of original Möllhausen drawings and sketches, all coming to the society through the generosity of the Whipple family.⁵ The illustrations reproduced here are from this source.

We join Möllhausen at Fort Smith and will travel with him until he has crossed the 100th Meridian and left Oklahoma:

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Fort Smith, like every other town in America, before it has well come into existence begins to think of establishing railroad communications. In the summer of 1853, when this railroad fever had reached its crisis, a small company under the command of Lieut. Colonel Whipple U.S.S., met here on the subject of an undertaking no less important than that of marking out a suitable line for a railway between this point and Pueblo de los Angeles on the Pacific Ocean; by which it is proposed that the locomotives shall hereafter rush fearlessly through the territories of hostile Indians, establish a connection between the two oceans, and bring the gold mines of California within easy reach. For a long time this matter of the construction of a railroad to the Pacific Ocean had been a favourite subject of conversation, as well as of more serious debate, in all the western settlements; no one of the numerous little towns had neglected to furnish, in their newspapers, the most exhaustive proofs, that the line must absolutely run through their district if the advantages of good coal, excellent timber, and an admirable supply of water were not to be neglected.

For a considerable time meetings had been held, resolutions taken, deputations sent from town to town, the views of the locality obstinately defended, and even maintained occasionally in pugilistic encounters; and, finally the government of the United States had organised three several expeditions, under the guidance of engineer officers, and with a suitable military escort to traverse the country in various directions, and report concerning the several advantages of the proposed lines.

⁵For a complete list of the Möllhausen drawings owned by the Society, see Dr. Charles Evans, "Itemized List of the Whipple Collection", *The Chronicles of Oklahoma*, Vol. XXVIII, No. 3 (Autumn, 1950), p. 231.

The southern expedition, to which I belonged, had to follow the thirty-fifth parallel of north latitude, commencing its labours at Fort Smith.⁶ The plan of operations best adapted to the purpose in view was at length agreed on, regard being had to the wishes of the Fort Smith people that the line should pass through their town, and the persons who were to carry the plan into execution,—namely geologists, surgeons, botanists, astronomers and draughtsmen, twelve⁷ persons in all, were all there with bag and baggage, waggons, provisions, instruments and utensils of various descriptions; but there were still wanting mules and labourers, two wants which afforded great satisfaction to the inhabitants, who immediately offered to supply both, the first for good payment, the labourers for nothing, and furnished moreover in many cases with good recommendations. The settlement lies too far to the west to afford many opportunities of getting rid of superfluous mules and unemployed labourers.

The mules of these regions are dearer than elsewhere, and for the most part still unbroken, but they are strongly built of indomitable powers, of endurance, and indispensable for a journey through these endless western steppes. As for the workmen, they are strong sturdy fellows, who, though wild enough, and little to boast of in point of morals, can turn their hands to anything that is required, know the dangers of a journey of this kind, and will fight if need be for themselves and their comrades' skins.

The long stay at Fort Smith, which the manifold preparations for so tedious a journey rendered necessary, was employed by our young and jovial troop in the enjoyment of full measure of all the delights which here, on the frontiers of civilisation, we were about soon to renounce for so long a period; and the inhabitants of the little town consequently found means not only to obtain some pecuniary profit from their guests, but also to show themselves in the light of friendly hosts, who, if it were only for their amiability, deserved to have a Terminus. They on their parts were glad to keep in good humour the men who were to help them to their railway; and so it came to pass that we were overwhelmed with caresses and coaxings, and balls and festivals given in our honour,—a course of policy to which we saw not the least objection. We had quartered ourselves with a Mr. Rogers,⁸ formerly a major in the militia, and now, in the character of hotel-keeper and chief authority in Fort Smith, reposing on his laurels; and we found ourselves extremely contented, and well cared for at a charge of two daily dollars a head. In the evening, when the tropical heat had given way to a pleasant coolness, we were sure to find a merry party of guests assembled

⁶ The survey started from "Camp Wilson", a temporary bivouac established by the party a few hundred yards south of Ft. Smith.

⁷ The twelve are named and their duties detailed by *Whipple*, p. 238.

⁸ See footnotes 14 and 20, *ibid.*, pp. 245 and 248, for descriptions of Captain Rogers and his hostelry.

round the old gentleman, who entered into all their jokes, and told of many a hard tussle that he had had with hostile Indians in his younger days, and exhorted the young fellows to energy and perseverance in the work they were about to undertake. "My boys," he said, "you have a long and dangerous journey before you, but keep a good heart and find out the best line for the rails to California; and when you have found it don't forget that you are not without friends in Fort Smith, who will show themselves mindful of the trouble you have taken. You come back this way. I've got land enough hereabouts that will be worth a thousand times what it now is when we have the railroad finished, and if you like to come and settle in our town—a thriving one it will be then—I'll give every one of you a plot for building on that you may choose for yourselves."

These pleasant festive nights at Fort Smith were, however, soon at an end. In order to accustom ourselves to a camp life and discover practically any defect there might be in the equipment of the expedition, while it was still possible to supply it, we determined to take up our abode *pro tem.* in a forest clearing not far from the town, and pitched our tents accordingly in a spot⁹ protected from the burning rays of the sun for the greater part of the day by the overhanging boughs.

The party, including a military escort under the command of Lieutenant —Johns,¹⁰ consisted of above seventy persons; and the whole expedition was under the orders of the engineer, Lieutenant Whipple, a man who had already distinguished himself in similar undertakings, and to special professional qualifications united the advantage of particularly pleasing manners, which inspired confidence in all who approached him.

In a very short time we were all quite reconciled to our new mode of life, and by the time the charm of novelty was worn off,

⁹ Camp Wilson, *ibid.*, p. 247.

¹⁰ The name "Johns" given here is an error, probably typographical, made in one or the other—German or English—editions of Möllhausen's *Journal*. Whipple gives the name as "1st Lieutenant John M. Jones, 7th Infantry," in the published *Report of the Pacific Railroad Survey (Reports of Explorations and Surveys, Vol. III, op. cit., p. viii)*. Lieut. Jones came from Fort Gibson in command of the military escort, and was waiting at Fort Smith when Whipple and his party arrived there on July 2. Lieut. Jones accompanied the expedition to the Pacific Coast, Whipple reporting him as having been one who "contributed greatly to the success of our operations" in his letter to Secretary of War Jefferson Davis, June 30, 1855 (*ibid.*).

Lieutenant John Marshall Jones, a native of Virginia, graduated from the United States Military Academy at West Point, July 1, 1837. He was commissioned brevet 2nd Lieut., 5th Infantry, July 1, 1841. He served in the 7th Infantry, commissioned 2nd Lieut., April 18, 1845; Capt., March 3, 1855, and resigned May 27, 1861. He was commissioned Brig. Gen., in the Confederate States Army, in 1861, and was killed in action in the Battle of Spotsylvania, Virginia, on May 10, 1864. —Francis B. Heitman, *Historical Register and Dictionary of the United States Army* (Washington, 1903), Vol. I.

the power of habit had come in to reconcile us to the inconveniences, small or great, which are not easily separable from a bivouac. One sleeps well enough upon the ground when one has no choice, and scorpions and tarantulas soon lose their terrors; you learn to bear the heat when it must be borne; if you get wet, the rain cannot penetrate further than the skin; and broiled meat, and black coffee sweetened with maple sugar, make a superb meal when there is nothing better to be had.

One of the most difficult tasks in the preparations for a journey through these steppes is the breaking and shoeing these animals, whose strength and power of enduring fatigue, even under a scarcity of food and water, is incomparably greater than that of the horse. In situations where the latter, even though relieved of all burden, can scarcely drag along his exhausted limbs, and must perhaps at last be left behind as a prey to the wolves, the mule goes on patiently bearing his burden, and fighting against the dreadful enemy hunger by the way, by cropping the withered plants of the marshes, or even prickly brambles. But as the strength of the horse and the perseverance of the ass are in some measure united in the mule, so does he also unite his own person almost all the faults that can make horse or ass intolerable—timidity, obstinacy, perverseness, cunning, are the qualities with which one has to contend in them, especially in the process of breaking; and the difficulty is increased when the herd consists of animals hitherto unacquainted with one another, who have to make acquaintance by means of a fierce battle among themselves; and as many have usually been sold by former owners on account of incurable vice, it is often necessary to have recourse to severe and even cruel methods to subdue them. For this, which is no light labour, the assistance of Mexicans and Indians is almost indispensable. These people seem to have a kind of instinct by which, after a very cursory inspection of the herd, they can find out the most unmanageable animals in it, and they make it their business to catch them first.

The Arriero, as he is called, is provided with a long line or lasso ending in a noose, which he holds in loose rings in his right hand, and as soon as he has made up his mind which animal is to be his victim he gallops round and round the herd, now anxiously crowding together, and watches for a favourable moment when the mule shall expose his head. The moment he has done so, the Arriero whirls the lasso round his own head, and then flings it dexterously over that of the shy mule, which rears and kicks in indignation at the loss of its freedom. But the lasso is now round his neck, and the more he struggles, the tighter it becomes, so that in a very short time the exhausted creature feels that if it does not mean to be choked, it is necessary to admit the cogent reasoning of his antagonist, and he allows himself to be drawn under a sort of scaffolding, with four upright posts, between which he has just room to stand. The

animal is then lifted, by means of a cleverly contrived tackle, about three feet from the ground, one of its legs is attached by leathern thongs to each of the four posts, and before it can look around or guess what is going to be done, four smiths standing ready with iron and tongs have completed a work which, even with a quiet horse, usually takes ten times as long. As soon as the shoes are in their places, the frightened creature is delivered over to the waggon driver, the exhortations to obedience are repeated, with illustrative remarks, with the whip and the lasso; the well broken mules with which the novice is harnessed set him a good example, and his fits of rage become less frequent, until, in a relatively short space of time, the new mule is declared fit for service, and associated with his already tame brethren.

The luxuriantly wooded shores of the Arkansas, beyond the point where the Canadian River falls into it, are agreeably diversified by small prairies, which from time to time form openings in the thick forest.

The Sugar Loaf,¹¹ the Kavaneau,¹² and the Sans-bois mountains bound really paradisaical valleys, over which Nature has poured out every kind of loveliness with inexhaustible profusion. The meadows, which are perfect beds of splendid flowers, tempt the traveller almost irresistibly to linger, or even take up his abode in them. They are ready to receive whatever seed he may drop into their bosom and to return him a thousand fold; and the numerous little streams, which constantly refresh the soil, dispel the fear of the excessive heats of summer, and promise a joyful harvest; while the neighbouring woods offer the settler hard hickory trunks for the beams of his log-house, and slender stems enough for his fences. The winter is here milder than in most of the neighbouring regions; for the impenetrable woods and the near mountains defy the north wind and protect the tenderest germs from this enemy so dreaded in less favoured regions. Even the Red Skins were not able to resist such attractions, and when the covetous Pale Faces drove them over the Alleghany mountains and across the great river, the already half-civilised races of the Choctaws, Chickasaws, Creeks, and Cherokees, who had left the graves of their fathers and their hunting-grounds in the far east, gave up their unsettled nomadic life, and took up their abode in these western regions. In this new home they sowed and reaped, and learned from the grateful soil what the missionaries had long preached to them in vain, and what the selfishness of their white neighbours, who shamefully denied their capacity for culture, had constantly hindered them from learning.

¹¹ Möllhausen had made a side trip to Sugar Loaf Mountain on July 7th, footnote 16, *Whipple*, p. 246.

¹² Mount Kavanaugh. On present Oklahoma maps, this is shown as Cavanal Mountain west of Poteau, Le Flore County.

Every Indian is capable of civilisation, if only his first introduction to it is such as to awaken confidence, and do away with the mistrust that has existed for centuries among his people. From his first acquaintance with the European intruders he has been driven through the country like a noxious animal, flying continually from the arrogance of the whites, and often, through their unprincipled policy, engaged in bloody strife with brother tribes, or wickedly encouraged in his plans of vengeance for the thousand wrongs inflicted upon him by the professors of a religion of love, in order that they might obtain a justification for their own unchristian and treacherous behaviour. How, under these circumstances, should he have learned anything of the blessings of a peaceful settlement, of a cultivation of the soil, and of a regular and orderly life?

If there are, nevertheless, tribes to be found, who, without having entirely renounced the customs or the character of their forefathers, have become peaceful citizens, industrious cultivators of the ground, and well conducted, hospitable men, the very smallest part of the merit assuredly is to be ascribed to the Europeans. It has been almost wholly the result of the spontaneous development of the germs of culture and of all good, which, after long slumber, have at length burst forth under the least favourable conditions. It is delightful to the traveller to go from settlement to settlement among these Choctaws and Cherokees, and to find himself everywhere received with open arms like an old friend. Here the wanderer need have no fear of a rustling among the bushes, of the hissing arrow or the whistling tomahawk. The crow of the domestic cock mingles with the call of the little partridge, and the moaning cry of the panther has been long silent before the barking of the house-dog; and where once was heard the wild howl over slaughtered enemies and bloody scalps, you now listen to the peaceful bells of the grazing flocks and herds.

Here are blooming farms which would do honour to a European settler, luxuriant crops, and a general prosperity that enables such of these sons of Nature as aspire to higher culture to seek it in the Eastern States. He sees the wife of the Indian no longer degraded to be the slave of her husband, but receiving the honour due to her as a wife and a mother.

These new disciples of civilisation have learned from the whites to keep negro slaves for house and field labour; but these slaves receive from their Indian masters more Christian treatment than among the Christian whites. The traveller may seek in vain for any other difference between master and servant than such as Nature has made in the physical characteristics of the races; and the negro is regarded as a companion and helper, to whom thanks and kindness are due when he exerts himself for the welfare of the household.

These pictures of content and domestic peace must not, however, be sought for too near the settlements of the whites, and also not at the time when the government of the United States sends its annual payment for the lands sold and ceded to them by the Indians; and when cruel speculators find means to get the greater part of the treasure, just received, back again into the hands of the whites.

The most efficient means for this miserable purpose is of course "fire-water." A small quantity of this poison is enough to rob the Indian of his reason; and when one of them has in the madness of intoxication parted with what he has become possessed of but an hour before, and which might have helped him to a comfortable existence in future, the speculator, having ascertained that there is no more money to be got out of him, drives him without mercy from his door.

On the 15th of July 1853, the expedition under Lieutenant Whipple left the camp at Fort Smith, and in accordance with the previously arranged plan, crossed the river Poteau, which was easily done as the garrison boat could be used. Once on the other side, there was nothing for the long train of waggons to do, but to follow the road along the marshy bottomlands on the sharp angle formed by the Arkansas and Poteau. The surveyors had to pursue their labours in this crooked route, on which it was not possible to describe a long straight line, since the thick growth of canes, which had taken the place of underwood beneath the high cottonwood trees and sycamores, did not admit of any considerable deviations from the path we were following. After a few miles, the road began to rise, and Indian farms glimmered occasionally between the impenetrable masses of forest. The old road, in laying out which the endeavour had been to avoid the more considerable obstacles, and take advantage of every little opening in the woods, was not in a state to admit of rapid progress with the waggons. Roots of trees and decaying trunks every moment arrested the procession, and since the thick shake of the overhanging boughs had prevented the drying of the ground, the last of the twelve waggons (each drawn by six mules) had to be literally drawn out of the mud, as if from a morass. Scarcely had we reached the higher ground on which the waggons could roll easily along, and the beasts of burden obtain a firmer footing, than the oppressive heat was varied by a tremendous storm, by which the whole cavalcade was thrown into disorder. There was a clearing near a large plantation¹³ not far off; and after the waggons had been with some confusion drawn thither, we all hastened to get the mules unloaded and unsaddled, so as to allow them to run freely in a herd, and then everybody endeavoured to find the best protection he could for himself. Considering that this was our first

¹³ Camp 1. The first camp was at Ring's Plantation, east of present Spiro. See footnote 19, *Whipple*, p. 247.

day of march, and that our party was as yet scarcely organised, it will not appear surprising that it presented at this moment a somewhat dolorous and at the same time comic aspect. The high spirits of most of us had gone down, in some cases very low indeed, and one or two tender youths had taken refuge under the waggons, and were shutting their eyes from the glare of the lightning; others who liked to display their hardihood, as well as the really hardy workmen, lay down wrapped in their blankets on the grass; but it might be observed that while the workmen soon fell asleep, the gentlemen had to stuff their blankets in their mouths to keep their teeth from chattering with cold, occasioned by the thorough wetting they had got. The most cautious and prudent of the party set about putting up a tent, and after many a vain attempt had just succeeded nicely in the unaccustomed work, when the sky cleared up, and the sun looked laughingly out upon the drenched and deplorable figures.¹⁴

Some of the most practical of the party had nevertheless found means to shelter themselves pretty successfully, by spreading the blankets over the bent boughs of a shrub, and then digging with their knives a canal round it; while their saddles placed in an inverted position formed a sort of chair, on which their weapons and their persons remained high and dry under their dripping canopy; the rain running off through the channel they had dug for it, and the hunched up occupant of the bower pursuing his meditations on the beauties of nature undisturbed.

In the meantime the black clouds had covered the whole horizon, and enveloped the entire landscape in gloom; the lightning, flash after flash gleaming from all points of the compass—drawing dazzling zigzag lines, and lighting up the dark masses of the woods with a peculiar magic splendour. The storm violently shook the tops of the highest trees, as if in rage at not being able to find an entrance beneath their dense canopy—heavy claps of thunder succeeded each other with only intervals of a second or two, sufficient to enable us to hear the roar of the distant storm, the downward rush of the rain, or the fall of the decayed trunks of trees. Just as the tempest had reached its climax, a glare of lightning, accompanied by a deafening burst of thunder, struck the extreme summit of a mighty hickory tree—a crash followed, and the tree was cleft from the top to the root.

The frightened herd of mules, which had been crowding anxiously together, now dispersed grazing in all directions, our camp fires began to crackle and blaze, and every one looked out for the driest and most comfortable spot he could find, in which to pass the night, and gain new strength for the morning's march.

¹⁴ Whipple records the events of the same storm, *ibid.*, p. 247.

At the distance of about a mile from the river a road runs through the valley of the Arkansas, as far as the Choctaw Nation Agency, about fourteen miles from Fort Smith.¹⁵ The paths which occasionally cross it are only those made by the Indians, with one exception, namely, that of a bye road which strikes off five miles before you get to the Agency, and runs to Fort Koffee [sic] on the Arkansas, and thence again in a straight line to the Agency, after re-joining the main road, which here crosses a broad prairie. The bye road leads entirely through the forest, which here assumes quite a different character, consisting wholly of dwarf oaks, and the underwood being replaced by luxuriant grass and flowers. Northward from the road a solitary hill of conglomerate rises a hundred and fifty feet from its base; it is but scantily wooded, and affords from its summit a fine prospect over the valley of the Arkansas, to where, near Van Buren, the horizon is bounded by mountains.

The most noxious and poisonous animals of the whole region seem, however, to have made this hill their headquarters. Just as you reach the top you find, perhaps, the copper-head snake, rolled up into a ball, but stretching his head towards you, darting his tongue out, and seeming to measure the distance between him and the foreign disturber of his peace, while preparing for a spring. If you happen to roll away a stone from the place where it has been lying, you are sure to find a whole nest of scorpions beneath it, the largest about three inches long and the smallest scarcely perceptible, but raising their tails, armed with poisonous stings, in the most hostile manner. As this is not quite pleasant company, you make but a short stay on this hill, and a short time after you have left it, at a sudden turn of the road you see old Fort Koffee lying¹⁶ before you. This little fortress was erected thirty years ago, as a defence against the Indians, and named after its founder, the American general Koffee.¹⁷ It is beautifully situated on a hill about eighty feet high, that rises abruptly from the waters of the Arkansas, and on the landside slopes gently down; and the white building gleams out pleasantly from the dark cedars. After the

¹⁵ Camp 2 was established July 19 near the Choctaw Agency, a location later known as Skullyville, and after the Civil War as Oak Lodge, about a mile and a half east of present Spiro. For its history, see William B. Morrison, "The Saga of Skullyville," *Chronicles of Oklahoma*, Vol. XVI, No. 2 (June, 1938), p. 234.

¹⁶ Fort Coffee was located at "Swallow Rock" on the Arkansas River. On April 22, 1834 work was started on the post and it was occupied by the 7th Infantry on June 16, 1834. It was abandoned in November 1838.

¹⁷ General John Coffee, a personal friend of General Andrew Jackson, commanded the Middle Tennessee Mounted Rifle Brigade, Tennessee Volunteers, in the Creek War of 1813. He served with General Jackson in the Battle of New Orleans, January 8, 1815. As President, Andrew Jackson appointed General John Coffee and Major John H. Eaton U. S. Commissioners who made the Treaty of Dancing Rabbit Creek on September 27, 1830, which provided for the removal of the Choctaws from Mississippi to the Indian Territory.

building of Fort Smith, however, Fort Koffee lost its garrison, and was, twelve years ago, transformed into a missionary¹⁸ school house, and the buildings erected for a warlike purpose have since then been turned to account for peaceful ends. Well cultivated fields of maize and wheat lie close round the gardens, in which negro slaves are sometimes diligently at work and sometimes loitering leisurely about; while groups of darkcoloured children at play peep out curiously with their black eyes at the passing wanderer. The school is supported by the American government, and under the guidance of a married Methodist preacher.¹⁹ On an average about fifty of the young Choctaws are receiving their education here, and a similar institution for girls²⁰ was a few years ago established nearer to the Agency, and is now apparently very prosperous, and producing good fruit. The way from the Mission to the Agency leads along the side of a spacious prairie, sometimes crossing parts of the grassy plain, sometimes cutting off small tracts of light wood, and at last, when near the Agency, turning into the deep forest, when after proceeding for a short distance you come again upon fields of maize and wheat, the log-houses, surrounded by flourishing young fruit trees, which announce the commencement of the rising Indian town²¹

The town itself consists of a kind of broad street, formed of log-houses and gardens, and does not differ much in appearance from many other thriving villages; Indians, Negroes, and Europeans are seen moving about—domestic animals of all sorts enliven the farmyards, gardens, and streets; the sound of the threshing machine is heard, and the regular fall of the smith's hammer upon the anvil, and in general there is an appearance of lively industry

¹⁸ The abandoned buildings at Fort Coffee were repaired and, in time other new buildings were erected, for the establishment of Fort Coffee Academy for Choctaw boys, by appropriations provided by the Choctaw General Council in 1842. The Academy was operated under the auspices of the Methodist Episcopal Church, and was first opened for students on January 9, 1844.—"Life Among the Choctaws," *The Chronicles of Oklahoma*, Vol. XXXI, No. 3 (Spring, 1953), pp. 102-07, illustrated by a sketch of "Fort Koffee" school by H. B. Möllhausen (original sketch in Whipple Collection, OHS).

¹⁹ The Reverend William H. Goode was appointed Superintendent of Fort Coffee Academy; the Reverend Henry C. Benson served as teacher.—*Ibid.*

²⁰ This school for Choctaw girls in charge of the Methodist Episcopal Church was established by the Choctaw General Council in November, 1842. The school was named New Hope Academy, and with the completion of the first buildings was first opened to students in the fall of 1845. It was located a mile east of the Choctaw Agency at a large spring, and about five miles from Fort Coffee.—Carolyn Thomas Foreman, "New Hope Seminary," *The Chronicles of Oklahoma*, Vol. XXII, No. 3 (Autumn, 1944), pp. 271-92.

²¹ The postoffice here, established June 26, 1833, was named "Choctaw Agency," though the village was best known in the Choctaw Nation as Skullyville. The origin of the name Skullyville is from the Choctaw word *iskuli*, "a small coin," plus the suffix *ville* (French), "town" or "city," alluding to the annuity payments to the Choctaws made at the Agency, under Choctaw treaty provisions with the U. S. Government.

about the place, called by the Indians Hei-to-to-wee [!], but by the American population Sculleville [Skullyville] or simply the "Agency."

In order to protect the Indians from the oppressions of the whites, and transact their affairs with the government of the United States, as well as to maintain the interests of the whites among their red-skinned brethren, agents have been placed among the various tribes, and have generally become the founders of a settlement. Not only Indians, but whites also, are willing to settle in their neighbourhood; the latter of course with a view to gain, and to being always at hand with goods for barter. In this manner arose the town of Sculleville [Skullyville.] The Agency, with the buildings necessary for cattle-breeding and agricultural purposes, lies on a little stream, or rather spring, which gushes out from the rock, and increasing with every step, hastens towards the Arkansas, between which river and the Poteau the Agency is equidistant.

A smith's forge and storehouses soon made their appearance, and before long well managed farms, surrounded by beautiful orchards and corn-fields, and the Agency became the rendezvous of all the industrial population of the country as well as of the vagabond Indian. The want of an inn was soon felt; for the Indians both men and women were now often unaccustomed to sleeping on the ground in the open air, and a small boarding-house helped to render the little town complete; and there may sometimes be seen alighting at it Choctaw gentlemen and their families who have been to visit their daughters at school.

Although the Indian population is of course accustomed to intercourse with whites, the appearance of our expedition, with its military escort, attracted a great deal of attention, especially as we proceeded to pitch our camp near Sculleville, evidently with the intention of making a stay of some days. It happened, also, that a council of Choctaw chiefs was being held at the same time, so that it was no wonder if people flocked to the spot from far and near, and that the town assumed its gayest aspect. Men and women all appeared in their best clothes, which, though cut in the European fashion, exhibited glaring contrasts of bright colours and many fantastic and most untasteful decorations. The camp was the great point of attraction, and as I had set up a kind of studio in my tent, many of the Indians came crowding that way, evidently speculating on the chance of having their portraits taken in their splendid full dress. Arrangements for running matches, shooting matches, horse races, dances, and especially for grand games of ball playing, which are peculiar in their kind, came off with great celerity; wonderful things were to be done in these few days; and certainly a traveller may esteem himself fortunate who ar-

rives at Sculleville at the time of a great public meeting of the Choctaws, for he may then learn in a short time, from his own observations of this interesting people, more than he could gather by mere inquiry less satisfactorily in a much longer period.

Christianity has found its way to these people, but still many of them remain attached to the faith of their fathers, which promises them the continued existence of their souls after death, and is in its main points nearly the same as that of the Northern Indian races.

At the western end of Sculleville lies a small warehouse (with a somewhat raised corridor), which is the rostrum of the Choctaw orator, and the open sky the ceiling of his hall.

On a magnificent summer evening, the whole masculine population of Sculleville was assembled before his rostrum, and of the camp of Lieutenant Whipple very few were wanting. The Indians had mostly brought their wives with them, but the ladies were too modest to approach the Council, and remained at a distance; for although the wives of the Choctaws have now assumed something like their rightful place, and are no longer slaves to their husbands, as among most uncivilized nations, they are themselves reasonable enough to see that the interference of a single woman in political affairs would sometimes do more than the men of the whole tribe could make good again. It will probably be a long time before the emancipation of the sex is to be looked for amongst the Choctaws.

The first orator²² who presented himself, though a great chief, was no painted and plumed warrior. He wore a cotton hunting-shirt of rather fantastic cut, a brown low-crowned hat shaded his copper-coloured physiognomy, he looked dusty, as if from a long ride, and his horse, still saddled and bridled, stood a little way off.

From his first word the most breathless stillness reigned, and every one listened with profound attention, even those among his auditors who were entirely ignorant of the language in which he spoke. He had no time for preparation, but he knew what he wished to say; there were no theatrical gestures, or attempts to excite the passions of his hearers, but merely a light movement of the hand occasionally accompanying the most emphatic words, which although uttered in deep guttural tones, were distinctly audible to the most distant of the assembly. He spoke with ease and freedom, and was interrupted neither by applause nor contradiction; only a unanimous *Hau!*²³ followed on certain questions that

²² Reference here is to Chief Cornelius McCurtain.—See footnote 34, *Whipple*, p. 253.

²³ This expressin is not pure Choctaw, and is evidently Möllhausen's interpretation. The proper assent of a Choctaw audience to a speaker in old times was "Ai-omeh!" (ai, intensive prefix, and *omeh!* [well!], an exclamation usually used by men).

he asked, and when he had ended there was a short murmur of remarks among his auditory, and then another orator took his place.

The questions in discussion were, first, a proposal for running the railroad across a part of the Choctaw Land, to which it is probable that the circumstance of our party being encamped on the spot had given rise; and, secondly, a change in the form of government, as it had been proposed that the power now distributed among several chiefs should be delegated to one.^{23a}

The judicial business is conducted in the same manner; and the Choctaws are strict and inflexible in the administration of justice. The punishment of death is sometimes inflicted, in which case the delinquent is seated opposite his judge, cross-legged on the same blanket, and when he is condemned receives his death by a bullet on the spot.^{23b}

The sitting on the present occasion was prolonged to a late hour of the night, one speaker following another without any interruption, and the same attention being paid to the last as to the first; even those who did not understand a word were not tired, and the effect of mere tone and gesture upon them was such, that an American exclaimed, "I used to think English was the finest language in the world, but now I doubt whether Choctaw does not equal it."

On the following morning²⁴ our party was again dispersing in small groups about the dark forest paths, for as the expedition was now complete in its numbers, it was intended that it should be soon again in motion, in order to approach the great prairies

^{23a} The contemplated change in the number of chiefs mentioned here was later provided in a new constitution for the Choctaw Nation, adopted in a Choctaw convention meeting at Skullyville, January, 1857. This "Skullyville Constitution" delegated the executive power formerly held by three elected chiefs to one titled, "Governor of the Choctaw Nation." This title of "Governor" was changed to "Principal Chief" in a constitution adopted at Doaksville in 1860; this law was in force until the close of the Choctaw government when Oklahoma became a state in 1907. However, the Choctaw executive was addressed in conversation "Governor" as a courtesy title, during the period; the title "Governor" is also found in newspaper accounts referring to the Choctaw "Principal Chief."

^{23b} The description of the death penalty given here was unusual, if not unknown, among the Choctaws. One accused of crime was tried before a regularly organized court of the Choctaw Nation. If condemned to suffer penalty of death, he was allowed to go free but, under the code of honor, the condemned Choctaw returned on the day set for his execution which was usually shooting by a light-horseman or special officer appointed by the court.

²⁴ On July 26 the party left Skullyville and moved ten miles west to Camp 3. Camp 4 was an additional five miles to the west. Near Camp 4 Möllhausen identified some new species of fish. See footnote 24, *Whipple*, p. 250.

Mule Creek, a branch of the San Bois in present Haskell County and western Le Flore County, was named thus because of the wild chase by horsemen of the party after a beautiful dun colored mule lost by Lieut. Jones at Camp 3. *Stanley, op. cit.*, p. 260, describes the incident.

by easy marches, and so, while accustoming the men and animals to their work, to keep their strength undiminished for the privations they must expect in the immense and often arid steppes through which they would have to travel. The further you go from the Poteau, and the nearer you approach the Sans-bois Creek, the lighter become the woods, and the more frequent the pleasant green prairies; here and there occur ranges of hills, in the neighbourhood of which the country loses its fertility; the sandstone lies near the surface, the upper ridge of the mountains consisting of strata of sandstone lying from south-east to north-west. In the woods some cedars are to be found, but chiefly oaks in such amazing variety, that it would not be difficult to collect from five and twenty to thirty different species.

The country is rich in springs and streams flowing towards the Sans-bois, which, proceeding from the south-west, pours itself into the Arkansas some miles below the mouth of the Arcadian [Canadian]. These waters are good for drinking, and swarm with fish, the majority of which belong to the various species of Pomotis.²⁵

Near the Sans-bois mountains the road winds between a chain of rocky hills, where a heavy train can make way but very slowly, and whoever is in possession of a good mule, tired of the creaking of the waggons and the perpetual cries of the mule drivers, is fain to seek a path for himself, even at the risk of losing his way, especially as the risk is not great, the woods being light, and the meadows that so frequently interrupt them affording the traveller such a wide prospect that it is not difficult to find the track of the waggons again, should he lose it.

²⁵ "The General Report upon the Zoology of the Several Pacific Railroad Routes" published in Vol. X (Washington, 1859), *Reports of Explorations and Surveys, op. cit.*, attest the boundless energy and keen interest of H. B. Möllhausen in collecting many zoological specimens, chiefly fishes and birds, while on the Whipple Expedition. This remarkable man must have fished in all the streams along the way in Oklahoma, beginning on Sugar Loaf Creek, then on the headwaters of the San Bois and its tributaries, on the tributaries of the Canadian, Coal Creek west of present McAlester, and on west including a small stream near Rock Mary. He is cited as the collector of many different kinds of fish found in Oklahoma by the noted naturalist, Charles Girard, M.D., in his report on "Fishes" (400 pages, many engravings) published in Vol. X, *ibid.* The minnow-like fish (*Bryttus humilis*) caught by Möllhausen near Rock Mary is here described (*ibid.*, pp. 21-22) and illustrated by a "size of life" engraving (Plate VII, Fig. 9), while another engraving (Plate VII, Fig. 13) shows a different kind of the same species caught by Möllhausen on Sugar Loaf Creek. The "Report on Birds" by Dr. C. B. Kennerly, physician and naturalist on the Whipple Expedition, published as Part IV, No. 3, Vol. X, *ibid.*, lists Möllhausen as a collector of more than sixty different kinds of birds, most of them found in the autumn west of Oklahoma, but including a parakeet (p. 21) and a yellow-crowned heron (p. 33) from near Fort Smith, besides a green heron (p. 33) found on "Sans Bois Creek, Choctaw country."

In these little solitary excursions, the wanderer, besides coming from time to time upon an Indian farm, where he has a good chance of obtaining rural productions at a small price, and meeting with little adventures, has often the good fortune to fall in with various scientific treasures; such, for instance, as the most beautiful specimens of fossil ferns, in the beds of small streams, upon inclinations of beds of coal visible on their banks, or upon new kinds of cactus²⁶ which seem to announce the approach to the Flora of Texas.

On the north side it is easy to ride up almost all the hills, but they are very abrupt and precipitous on the south, so that great care is required to descend these steep rocky declivities without coming into much closer contact with the stones upon them than is desirable. But presently from this declivity you obtain such a wonderful view, that you are continually tempted to repeat the not very safe descent, by climbing the hills at various points. When you reach the rather higher plateau which, on account of a few crippled pines, has received the name of Pine Grove,²⁷ such a landscape is opened to the view, that any one must indeed be dull and insensible who can contemplate it without not merely surprise but emotion.

The whole country of the Choctaws lies there unrolled before your eyes, and looking to the east whence you have come, you see for the last time the Sugar Loaf mountain on the borders of the State of Arkansas, and a low chain, scarcely distinguishable in the horizon, passes behind the dark masses of the Cavaneau, which are met by the mountains of Sans-bois, the highest points of which, due south from Pine Grove, gradually sink towards the west, and lose themselves in the flat country.

The great valley, lying thus like a picture framed in by blue mountains, is by no means a level surface varied only by the distribution of forest and prairie, although that will often compose a scene of great beauty, but hills and even mountains lie scattered about it in all directions, and the green prairies and dark woods are intersected by streams and rivulets, the windings of which are traceable through the meadows by the bushes on their banks, and through the forest by the deeper green of the trees.

The traveller is tempted to linger long at this point, for he is now on the frontier of a rich and beautiful country, and will soon find himself in one where his eye will search vainly round the horizon for some spot on which it can rest with pleasure. He bids

²⁶ There are twenty-four exquisite, original drawings and paintings of cacti by H. B. Möllhausen, in the Whipple Collection, Oklahoma Historical Society, ref. fn. 5, *supra*.

²⁷ Pine Grove or Piney Grove was a steep hill about one mile from Camp 5. Whipple also describes it in detail; Foreman, *Pathfinder*, pp. 39-40.

farewell to the paradise, cuts his name on a crippled oak on the rocky declivity, casts a long lingering glance at the Sugar Loaf now veiled in mist, and then looks about cautiously for the best place to scramble down, leading his mule behind him. When he gets to the bottom he turns his face westward, the woods become lighter, and he soon finds himself on the edge of the prairie, at whose western extremity among some trees he hopes to find his companions with their tents already pitched.²⁸

Some of the larger of the prairies, which lie apart from others, are often made the place of rendezvous for thousands of Indians, who come together to carry on their ancient games, which are coeval with the existence of their tribes, and which will only be forgotten when they perish. No matter how far they may have advanced in civilization, the Indian gentleman educated in the Eastern States is as ready as the still wild hunter of the same tribe to throw aside all the troublesome restraints of clothing, and painted from head to foot in the fashion of the "good old times," to enter the lists with unrestrained eagerness for a grand national game of ball.

As soon as the Pine Grove and the principal heights of the Sans-bois mountains are left behind, the character of the country becomes entirely changed, and only in the bottom lands, or on the banks of small streams, are strips of forest to be seen, and small clumps of trees scattered here and there over the rolling prairie, as the Americans call it. Hitherto you have been travelling through woods interspersed with prairies, now there lie before you prairies varied by occasional patches of wood.²⁹

When you come within a few miles of the Sans-bois creek, however, you see signs of a more vigorous vegetation: you come upon fences, corn fields, and herds of cattle, and frequently catch a glimpse through the trees of a log-house. If you follow the road into the forest that forms the broad border of the Sans-bois, you will hear, at almost every hour of the day, the strokes of a smith's hammer falling briskly and regularly on the glowing iron and the anvil beneath it, as long as the industrious cheerful smith is able to wield it.

Following the sounds of the forge, you find your way through herds of sleek well fed cows and oxen, who are reposing comfortably across your path, and are not at all inclined to allow themselves to be disturbed in the very pleasant occupation of chewing the cud; you come soon to a clearing, and to the paling of a farm-yard, in the middle of which rises a rough but well-built log house some Indian children are wallowing about before the door, and

²⁸ Camp 5, July 29th.

²⁹ Camps 6 and 7.

a haughty-looking cock is observing their proceedings, while his own large polygamous family is picking up a living about the yard; a cleanly dressed Indian woman is following her domestic occupations, her dark earnest eyes continually turning to her youngest darling, rolling there in the grass, some large dogs are stretched out in the shade of a tree, and would enjoy completely the sweets of idleness, were it not for the trouble of snapping occasionally at a tiresome fly. But unweariedly the mighty hammer continues its strokes, so that the little smithy trembles again, and the bellows draw long deep breaths.

Somehow the alarm that has been sounded finds its way into the smithy; bellows and hammer stop, and a sooty Indian³⁰ advances to the door,—and extending his hand with a friendly “How do you do?” invites the stranger to enter his abode, while his assistant, a blue black negro, leaves the fire to take care of itself to welcome the unexpected visit from a white man. In the meantime the train has come up; visitors make their appearance one after another at the little farm, and begin to look about them for eggs, milk, butter, chickens, and such like dainties, for which they gladly pay high prices, and the eyes of the Indian woman sparkle at the sight of cash, for already in her mind’s eye she sees the pretty stuffs and gay ribbands which this unlooked-for windfall will enable her to procure. The Indian smith sells the travellers some head of cattle, a wagon-load of maize, and is even induced without much difficulty to accompany the expedition as guide, as far as Gaines Creek, on the frontier between the lands of the Choctaws and Chickasaws. The conditions of the bargain are soon arranged; the smith washes the soot and ashes from his face, smooths his long black hair—his stout boys saddle him a horse—his wife hands him his coloured hunting shirt, his powder-horn, and shot-pouch—his rifle he takes himself, and after a brief farewell to his family, and some instructions to the negro for the eight days of his absence, mounts his horse, proceeds to the head of the procession, and pursues his way without once looking round.

Our bivouac³¹ for the first night of his guidance was to be on the banks of the Sans-bois River, which receives its waters from the mountains of that name, and flows for a considerable time in their vicinity, but it has another source in the angle farther west, where it is joined by the Gaines Creek³² and the south arm of the Canadian. Flowing then directly towards the east, it continues small up to the great turn, where it is joined by the waters of Cooper’s Creek,³³ a stream rising near the Canadian, and carries them in a north-easterly direction to the Arkansas. Like

³⁰ Fraser, an Indian employed by Whipple as a guide (Frazer or Frazier).

³¹ Camp 8, August 1st. The party has crossed the Sans Bois.

³² Gaines Creek was first designated South Fork.

³³ Cooper Creek is present Beaver Creek.

all the rivers of that region, the Sans-bois is bordered by land as well adapted to the purposes of the farmer as land can be, its waters are clear and wholesome, flowing mostly over pebbles, and abounding to an extraordinary degree in fish. It is well worth while in the evening to throw in a line while you sit listening to the nocturnal life in the forest,—the loud flapping of the wings of the wild turkey, as he flutters from bough to bough, seeking his house for the night on the top of some lofty tree, while the white heron announces his presence by his hoarse cry, and the owl utters his hollow shriek. I was busy drawing fish after fish to the bank, but a rustling sound in the bushes near me made me snatch my rifle, which I had laying ready, though only to lay it down again and feel rather ashamed of myself, for I had been alarmed by no more formidable animal than a drake. There is not really the slightest cause for alarm, for the Wild Comanche is still far off, and the call of the sentinel from the camp is distinctly audible,— and what a glorious enjoyment there is in this solitude!

In short marches our procession drew near the sources of the Sans-bois, but the almost vertical rays of the burning August sun made travelling in the middle of the day very exhausting; by the afternoon every one was longing intensely for shade and cold water, so that we generally made it a rule to get our creaking train of waggons in motion soon after sunrise, in order to get as much of the day's march done in the early hours as we could. The sandy Canadian River, flowing ten miles to the northward of our route, had not yet been touched upon, and it was therefore agreed among some members of our party to make an excursion to it, if possible at the spot where the Northfork and Southfork fall into it nearly opposite one another. A day on which our party was to make a halt was fixed on for the purpose.³⁴

As soon as we were within two days' journey of Gaines Creek, we pitched our camp,³⁵ with rather more care than usual, in a most lovely little valley, on the borders of a murmuring brook and beneath the shade of lofty umbrageous trees; our white tents gleamed out prettily on the fresh green meadow gay with flowers which extended from our camp to the foot of the neighbouring wood-crowned hills. The mules, freed from their burdens, were grazing in herds, or rolling in the cool soft grass to cleanse their heated and dusty bodies. The human part of the company was lying scattered about in groups, talking cheerfully over the little occurrences of the day. All at once, however, it was perceived that Dr. Bigelow, the botanist of the expedition—a general favourite and

³⁴ Möllhausen and Dr. Bigelow made a side trip to the Canadian on August 3rd.

³⁵ Camp 9. This camp, near a stream called by Whipple "Santa Rita," was near present Quinton in Pittsburg County.

by far the oldest of the party, was not forthcoming. The aged doctor was a pattern of gentleness and patience, always rejoicing with those that rejoiced, never wanting where a hearty laugh or a good joke was to be heard, quite conscious of his own little eccentricities, and quite willing that others should amuse themselves with them. He was not only a zealous botanist, but also an enthusiastic sportsman, though it must be owned that his exertions in the latter department were not productive of as much profit as in the former, for he had never yet succeeded in bagging anything but a rattlesnake and an old *hat*. The snake, which had rolled itself up conveniently into a ball, he managed to hit after firing at it only seven times, and his bullet went through the hat in a triumphant manner, somebody having thrown it upon the muzzle of his pistol. To his patients he was most kind and attentive, and of his mule, Billy, he made an absolute spoiled child.

The good old doctor was immediately missed, but there was no cause for any serious anxiety,—and while we were still discussing the matter this way and that, we heard a loud voice of the object of our anxiety, and immediately afterwards he emerged from the thicket driving Billy before him, and dragging an enormous snake behind. “Halloh, Dutchman,” he called out (that was the appellation he had thought proper to bestow on the German naturalist)—“Halloh, Dutchman, here’s something for you,—a splendid specimen of a snake;” and with these words he threw into the circle a gigantic rattlesnake of the species with lozenge shape marks, called Diamond rattlesnakes. It was seven feet long, four inches in diameter, and had wide open jaws, armed with a formidable row of poisonous teeth; and since, though it was dead, it showed no trace of a wound, every one was curious to hear the account of the doctor’s “fight with the dragon.”

After a ride of fifteen miles, through marshy lowlands, over gentle slopes adorned with luxuriant vegetation, across rocky ridges on the hard stone of which the ironshod hoofs of our mules sounded like hammers, and where little hares started from the low oak brushwood, our reconnoitring party reached the Canadian at the intended spot, namely, where the Northfork and Southfork join it.³⁶ The broad sandy bed of the river showed only some

³⁶ The South Fork of the Canadian River shown on maps that included the Oklahoma region from 1822 to 1860 is the stream now known as Gaines Creek. The latter name was applied to the stream locally in the Choctaw Nation by 1850. Möllhausen evidently mistook Longtown Creek for the South Fork of the Canadian which is farther west in present Pittsburg County, Longtown Creek emptying into the main Canadian opposite the North Fork of the Canadian near old North Fork Town, Creek Nation, vicinity of present Eufaula. On supposedly authentic maps of Oklahoma today, the main Canadian River is designated “South Fork of the Canadian” or “South Canadian.” Thus, the name “Canadian River” (i.e., main Canadian) has disappeared or is being lost even though early government reports and authentic historical volumes about Oklahoma refer to this noted river as the *Canadian*.

narrow shallow runnels of thick-looking water, but from the swiftness with which they ran, it was easy to see that when the water was high this innocent-looking river might assume a very wild aspect. The scene had a dreary desolate character, and though the banks were richly grown with cotton-wood and cedar, no agreeable effect was produced. Trunks of trees, blackened by the effects of the water and of time, lay uprooted and half covered with sand upon the banks, their withered ghostly-looking branches and roots sticking out; here sat the white heron motionless and as if petrified, there the grey bittern; and the vulture wheeled slowly above the almost dry bed of the stream.

We were all glad to get away from a place that had so little attraction in it; but the sun set when we were still five miles from the camp and Fraser urged us to hasten our return, though we would willingly have gone in pursuit of some of the wild turkeys that now made their appearance in masses, enlivening every wood, and flew, beating their wings, to the high trees where they sought their nightly rest. There was still a rocky chain to be crossed, the twilight was passing rapidly into darkness, and when we did occasionally see the starry heavens through the openings in the thick foliage, they only served to dazzle us and make the dark shades appear still blacker.

The Indian rode silently on, without slaking for a moment the pace of his horse, and we followed, one after another, quickly up the slopes, and still more quickly down into the ravines. No one wanted to be left behind, on we went rapidly in the darkness along a path that we should have traversed much more cautiously in the day time; and soon the watchfires of our camp, gleaming in the distance, informed us with what inexplicable exactness the Indian had hit the right direction through the pathless wilderness.

Gaines Creek³⁷ was reached at last, and the Indian smith³⁸ returned to his forge, so we had to seek another guide. As long as we remained in the country of the Chickasaws, in which we found ourselves after crossing³⁹ Gaines Creek, there was no difficulty in finding the way; and there was also plenty of choice of camp-

³⁷ Camp 10, reached August 4, was on the east side of Gaines Creek, a few miles east of present Reams in Pittsburg County.

³⁸ Fraser, having heard of the illness of his child, was paid off and left the expedition on August 5th.

³⁹ Gaines Creek was crossed August 5th and Camp 11 established three miles beyond at the home of Stephen Perry. (Gaines Creek, formerly called the "South Canadian," was the eastern boundary of the Chickasaw District in this part of the Choctaw Nation, until the Treaty of 1855 under which the Chickasaws set up their own Nation with new boundary lines.—Muriel H. Wright, "Organization of Counties in the Choctaw and Chickasaw Nations," *Chronicles of Oklahoma*, Vol. VIII, No. 3 [September, 1930], pp. 315-17, 319-20.)

ing places;⁴⁰ for running streams and gushing springs were sparkling all over among the rich grass of this beautiful country, at least unless where the exuberant climbing plants and wild grapes had absorbed all the moisture and nourishment of the soil to themselves. In this district the Chickasaws and Choctaws live in a peaceable manner together; for the former, who were originally found more to the south, have come to an amicable agreement with the Choctaws concerning the possession of certain lands, so that it is now often difficult to distinguish one tribe from the other. Their territory extends as far as the Canadian, whilst the paradisaical tract between the Canadian and the Arkansas is occupied by the Creeks or Mus-ko-gees. It is as yet but thinly settled; but well-managed prosperous farms are rising under the hands of the Indians, and the inexhaustible fertility of the soil repays the smallest labour with a superabundant harvest.

Not only competence, but even wealth, is to be found among these agricultural tribes; and where but a short time since the painted warrior was endeavouring to express his vague thoughts and wild fancies by hieroglyphical pictures drawn on a tanned buffalo hide, you may now see the civilised Indian, reading a newspaper printed in his mother tongue, and an Indian mistress directing the work of her negro slaves—who certainly enjoy milder treatment than she did herself when she was the slave of her lord and master in his savage days.

Our passage over Coal Creek⁴¹ was happily effected, and coals for our field smithy obtained; and since the land stretching out to the west appeared, with few interruptions, very flat, the chains of our surveyors were unpacked, and a viameter fixed to the wheel of a small light waggon. The road was smooth, and leading mostly through prairies, brought us nearer and nearer to the Canadian; and after a few marches, we arrived at the first settlement of the Shawnee Indians, which bears the name of Shawnee Village,⁴² though there is in reality no village at all, but only some thriving farms of agricultural Indians, lying somewhat closer together than usual, which has probably given occasion to the name, as a similar circumstance has procured for a settlement further on, the appellation of Shawnee Town.⁴³

⁴⁰ Camp 12 was near present McAlester and Camp 13 was near Haywood.

⁴¹ Camp 14 was on Coal Creek, near present Stuart.

⁴² An old house, known locally as "White Chimney," and other evidences of an old settlement located about a mile south of U. S. Highway No. 270, about two and a half miles southwest of Cabaniss in Pittsburg County is probably this Shawnee Village.

⁴³ The Shawnee Town location is on the south side of the Canadian River in Hughes County, about three miles north of Allen. Traces of this old settlement and old graves mark this site.

Scarcely was the arrival of the white party made known, than friendly Indians came trooping on horseback and on foot into our camp, bringing with them large quantities of maize, sweet melons, most refreshing water melons and juicy peaches for sale. Such visitors were of course exceedingly welcome, more especially as the deportment both of men and women was remarkably orderly and modest, and they moved about in their cleanly European costume with as much ease and decorum as if they had worn it from their birth.

The regularly featured faces of the men were moreover adorned by a handsome moustache, of which, as of an ornament very rare for an American Indian, they were not a little proud. The women were all what might be called handsome, and the roses visible on their cheeks, despite the dark colour of their skins, spoke of health and cheerfulness. In pleasant quarters does the weary wanderer find himself, when, resting before the cottage of one of these hospitable Indians in the shade of the roughly made protecting corridor, refreshing himself with new milk and fresh bread, or gathering juicy peaches in their cottage gardens, or finding out the water melons hidden in their cool shady bowers. The few families settled in this district appear far more happy and contented than the larger portion of their tribe,⁴⁴ who have proceeded northward to the Kansas and the Missouri, and have seen many of their number succumb to their cruel foes, small-pox and brandy.

The time which the Shawnees can spare from their farms, they generally employ in hunting expeditions, passing by twos and threes into the territories of the Kiowas and the hostile Comanches, to pursue the shaggy bison and the beautifully marked antelope, and after months of absence to bring back their pack-horses laden with dried meat. Their fondness for the chase and for adventure made it easy for us to find among them a guide,⁴⁵ who undertook to conduct our expedition as far as the Old Fort Arbuckle, the present abode of the great Delaware, the Black Beaver. A little stunted-looking Indian, denominated John Johnson,⁴⁶ mounted upon an extremely swift and powerful horse, was engaged in the capacity of scout. He was a crafty hunter, and though he seemed to pursue his way without taking notice of any-

⁴⁴ These Shawnee settlements were begun by some of the Absentee Shawnee who came here from Texas and other southern locations about 1839. They were joined here by bands of the Shawnees from Kansas about 1846.

⁴⁵ A Shawnee named Wen-the-ch-beh was employed by Whipple at Camp 14.

⁴⁶ John Johnson, a Shawnee, kept a small store at Shawnee Town where he sold such staples as coffee and sugar, and some merchandise, including saddles. He had several fields of corn and other crops, and a good stock of cattle and horses, besides plenty of hogs, turkeys and chickens. His peach orchard was "magnificent, trees breaking under the burden of their fruit." His dwelling was comfortably furnished, good meals served on a table set with chinaware, knives and spoons.—*Whipple*, p. 263,

thing, in reality nothing escaped the keen glance of his little sparkling eyes; he was very taciturn, but it was not so much because he did not understand English, as that he chose to be sparing of his words.

From Shawnee Village to Shawnee Town is a distance of twenty miles; the way lies near the Canadian River, and is entirely shaded by thick woods. Wild plums and wild cherries peep between the leaves, and an eatable kind of pear grows luxuriantly near the ground, whilst the wild vines wreath themselves round the loftiest trees, and ripen their grapes at their summits in the rays of the almost tropical sun. Between the two settlements on the north side of the Canadian, just at the mouth of "Little River," which reaches it from the north-west, stands an old fortress called Fort Edwards;⁴⁷ in which, for a long time, there has been no garrison, and whose barracks the Creek Indians have turned into barter-shops and stores, while cattle-breeding and agriculture are carried on, on a large scale in the neighbourhood. A little to the west, on the there high bank of the Canadian, stand still some wigwams or rather log-houses of Quappa [*sic*] Indians, who may boast of not having yet quitted the lands of their forefathers. But they have shrunk to a small band that cannot furnish above twenty-five warriors, and it would scarcely be supposed that they are all who are left of the once powerful tribe of the Arkansas, whose hunting grounds extended from the Canadian to the Mississippi, and who carried on sanguinary and successful warfare with the mighty Chickasaws.

Our train of waggons had scarcely left the Canadian of Shawnee Town, to take a south-westerly direction towards Delaware Mount,⁴⁸ than a number of small streams flowing towards the south-east had to be crossed. These were the sources of the Boggy,⁴⁹ which joins the Red River in Texas, and pours itself with it into the Gulf of Mexico. The banks of the Canadian form in this part the dividing watershed between the streams flowing towards the Mississippi on one side and the Gulf of Mexico on the other. Westward of the Delaware Mountains, the Topofkee Creek⁵⁰ brings its waters from the shores of the Washita, another tributary of the Red River, and carries them to the Canadian. Near the Dela-

⁴⁷ This was Fort Holmes established in 1834 on the east side of Little River at its mouth, on the present site of Bilby in Hughes County. The post was named for Lieut. Theophilus Holmes, a Dragoon officer who later rose to the rank of Lieut. General in the Confederate States Army. A few miles southwest across Little River was a trading establishment operated by James Edwards, father-in-law of Jesse Chisholm. The store was often known as "Fort Edwards."

⁴⁸ Delaware Mount is in northern Pontotoc County.—Foreman, *Pathfinder*, foot note 25, p. 54.

⁴⁹ This is Clear Boggy, the principal source of which is the large spring near old Byrd's Mill that is the water supply for the City of Ada.

⁵⁰ Present Sandy Creek, west of Ada.

ware Mountains the close woods come to an end, the rolling prairies become more extensive, the river beds drier, and the scattered groups of trees on their banks assume a lighter character.

On the 17th of August, we had passed Topofkee Creek and Mustang Creek (tributaries of the Canadian), and were still fifteen miles from the abode of the Black Beaver, when we pitched our camp⁵¹ on the edge of a wood, where a spring, gushing out of a sandstone rock, offered us good cool water. The weary company, thickly covered with dust, lay about before their airy tents, and gazed at the evening sun, which now for the first time seemed to sink in the grass of the distant prairie, and shot its red beams up to the zenith, while in the east above a dark wood, up rose the moon and mingled her silver light with the burning rays.

As soon as a streak of light in the east announced the coming day, every man was again on foot and hastening the preparations for departure, and the cool morning air encouraged us to work briskly at striking the tents and packing the waggons; though we did cast some longing glances towards the cook's blazing fire—the boiling coffee and the brown toasted cakes, and the venison steaks hissing in the pan.

The mules, who had been spending the night much to their satisfaction on the rich grass, were quite in a docile humour, and quietly allowed the cold bit to be put upon their hot tongues, and themselves to be harnessed in long teams to the heavy waggons. Jonhson,⁵² the Indian, mounted on his little horse, placed himself at the head of the procession of equestrians, cast one glance behind him, and then turned into the old scarcely recognisable road that led in a south-westerly direction. In this sunny and yet dewy morning, men and animals moved on cheerfully; even the heavy waggons seemed to bowl along easily on the smooth path, and the cattle that were drawing them appearing unconscious of their weight, amused themselves by looking out for tit-bits among the high grass, and cropping them as they went along.

Until noon, a continual rising of the ground was perceptible, but a chain of hills cut off the prospect towards the west, and across these heights lay our road. From thence the eye could range over an immense extent of ground, again bounded in the remote distance by blue mountain masses. At the western end of this sea of grass, and scarcely yet distinguishable, lay the Old Fort Ar-

⁵¹ Möllhausen and Whipple are not always traveling together in the same party and often camped at different locations. Whipple is now at least one day ahead. Möllhausen's camp for the 17th was in the area west of Ada, in Pontotoc County.

⁵² A Shawnee employed by Whipple at Shawnee Town. He left the party at Camp Arbuckle.

buckle,⁵³ about which a few of the Delawares have settled, and besides their principal occupation, the chase, carry on a little cattle-breeding and agriculture. As we approached it, we saw some herds of cattle lying scattered among the high grass, or moving with slow steps along an old buffalo path that led to the desired shade. This sight inspired our now languid procession with fresh life and spirit, and we all desired ardently to salute the celebrated Black Beaver, not to mention rummaging about in his garden after refreshing melons and peaches.

Old Fort, or, as it is sometimes called, Camp Arbuckle, served but a very short time as a residence for a garrison, which was afterwards moved thirty miles southward to the new fort of the same name.⁵⁴ The abandoned post was then given to a Delaware chief, named Si-ki-to-ma-ker (the Black Beaver), who had done the United States good service in the Mexican war as a hunter and guide.⁵⁵ The position was quite in accordance with his wishes; others of his race settled near him, and they now live very happily under the protection of the astute and experienced "Beaver."

The fort itself is such as one might expect to find in these wild regions, consisting of a number of log-houses built in a right angle at the edge of the forest, about a mile from the Canadian, which formerly served as barracks for soldiers; and there is also a separate court surrounded by a high palisade, that is intended as a place of refuge for cattle in case of an attack. Several Delaware families have now taken possession of the abandoned barracks, and are continuing the cultivation of the rice fields laid out by the former garrison. Domestic animals of all kinds increase here without any care, and the thievish Pawnee or Comanche, who should venture to meddle with any of the Delaware possessions, might lay his account with having to a certainty, sooner or later, his scalp hanging out to dry in a peach tree before the door of the Black Beaver; for few as are these descendants of their great and powerful race, the blood and the spirit of their fathers is living in them still, and they are still a terror to their enemies, and faithful self-sacrificing companions to their friends.

⁵³ Camp Arbuckle was established in 1850 by Marcy a mile northwest of present Byars in McClain County. The next spring the garrison was removed and the establishment was occupied by the Delawares under Black Beaver.—George H. Shirk, "The Site of Old Camp Arbuckle," *The Chronicles of Oklahoma*, Vol. XXVII, No. 3 (Autumn, 1949), p. 313.

⁵⁴ Fort Arbuckle was located 7 miles west of present Davis.—W. B. Morrison, "Fort Arbuckle", *Chronicles of Oklahoma*, Vol. VI, No. 1, (March, 1928), p. 26.

⁵⁵ Black Beaver, a famous Delaware Chief, was living at Beaverville, the name given the site of Camp Arbuckle.—Carolyn Thomas Foreman, "Black Beaver", *The Chronicles of Oklahoma*, Vol. XXIV, No. 3 (Autumn, 1946), p. 267.

The Delaware Indians,⁵⁶ who do not now number more than 800, inhabited originally, to the number of 15,000, the eastern parts of the States of Pennsylvania, New Jersey and Delaware. Like the Shawnees, they were destined to be continually conquering new hunting grounds, only that they might again resign them to the United State Government. Further and further west they were driven, and on every spot where they rested they had first to use their weapons in self-defence against powerful enemies, before they turned them against the wild animals, so as to obtain food and clothing.

Here, on the extreme frontier of civilisation on the borders of the boundless wilderness, the Delawares can gratify to their hearts' content their love of adventure. They carry their hunting expeditions to the coasts of the Pacific Ocean, and sometimes do not return to their settlements for years together. The long chain of the Rocky Mountains has scarcely a pass through which a troop of these bold hunters has not made its way, nor a spring whose waters they have not tasted. The Delaware fights with the grey bear in California, and pursues the buffalo in the steppes of the Nebraska [*sic*]; he follows the elk to the sources of the Yellowstone River, and throws the lasso over the maned head of the Mustang in Texas; and it must be added that he does occasionally take a scalp when he can find an opportunity, from a hunter or an enemy's race that he may meet with in the desert, or from the midst of a village that has kept insufficient watch.

From the mode of life followed by these people, it is not surprising that very few men are usually to be found in their settlements, and travellers may therefore consider themselves fortunate who are able to engage some of this race as scouts and hunters. Any at all remarkable feature of a country that a Delaware has seen but once in his life, he will recognise again years afterwards, let him approach it from what point he may, and tracts of country that he enters for the first time, he needs only to glance over, in order to declare with certainty in what direction water will be found. If the beasts of burden, so indispensable in this journey, have strayed away during the night, and have been given up for lost by every one else, having left apparently no trace behind, or because hostile Indians make it dangerous to attempt it, the Delaware will not fail to find their track, and will follow them for days or even weeks together, and return at last with the fugitives. These are the qualities that make them so desirable for guides, and their services, upon which the very existence of a whole party of travellers often depends, can hardly be paid too highly.

⁵⁶ For a brief history of the Delaware tribe, see Muriel H. Wright, *A Guide to the Indian Tribes of Oklahoma* (Norman, 1951), pp. 145-55.

Si-ki-to-ma-ker, the Black Beaver, and John Bushman,⁵⁷ his neighbour, are renowned as guides far and wide; and our expedition, in halting at Fort Arbuckle, had had it in view to use every means to induce one of them to accompany us in that capacity.

As the foremost members of our Expedition crossed the spacious court, where several women and children were basking in the sun, and asked after the Black Beaver, they were shown into the smallest log-house, where, under a simple corridor, on a kind of rough wooden settle, an Indian sat cross-legged smoking his pipe, and awaiting his visitors in perfect tranquillity. He was a meagre-looking man of middle size, and his long black hair framed in a face that was clever, but which bore a melancholy expression of sickness and sorrow, though more than forty winters could not have passed over it.

The arrival of visitors did not seem at all to disturb him, and his easy and unembarrassed manner showed that he was quite accustomed to intercourse with the Whites. He spoke fluently English, French, and Spanish, and about eight separate Indian languages; and after the first salutations and expressions of welcome, a tempting offer was made to him to induce him to accompany us. For a moment the eyes of the Indian gleamed with their wonted fire, but they soon became clouded over again, and he answered: "Seven times have I seen the Pacific Ocean at various points; I have accompanied the Americans in three wars, and I have brought home more scalps from my hunting expeditions than one of you could lift. I should like to see the salt water for the eighth time; but I am sick—you offer me more money than has ever been offered to me before—but I am sick—I am not likely to want, for my negro can attend to the barter trade, and my relations will help him, but if I die, I should like to be buried by my own people."

No representation that we could make on the subject was of the least avail; the Indian remained steady to his resolution, which arose out of the idea that this journey would be the cause

⁵⁷ John Bushman, a Delaware, was employed by Whipple as a guide to replace Johnson. He had served as a guide on Captain R. B. Marcy's Red River Expedition in 1852. Marcy described him: "Our most excellent and indefatigable hunter, John Bushman . . . , a man of eminently determinate and resolute character, with great powers of endurance, and a most acute and vigilant observer, accompanied by prominent organs of locality and sound judgment. These traits of character, with the abundant experience he has had upon the plains, make him one of the very best guides I have ever met with. He never sees a place once without instantly recognizing it on seeing it the second time, notwithstanding he may approach it from a different direction; and the very moment he takes a glance over a district of country he has never seen before, he will invariably point out the particular localities (if there are any such) where water can be found, when to others there seems to be nothing to indicate it."—Randolph B. Marcy, *Captain Fifth Infantry United States Army, Exploration of the Red River of Louisiana in the Year 1852*, (Washington, 1854), pp. 81-2.

of his death. Apparently, this notion had been put into his head by his wife, who, while playing with her only son a young black bear, frequently addressed to her husband remarks to us unintelligible. It was evident that she did not wish him to go—probably foreseeing that if he once set out he would not very soon return.

John Bushman, with his little son a beautiful squaw, paid us a visit in our camp; but it was only to declare how impossible it was for him at present to leave his land. Johnson, the Shawnee too, was now going back to his tribe; so that all that remained for us was to find our way for ourselves as we best might, from wood to wood and from water to water, through the desolate grassy wilderness already on fire in many places.

It happened that by mere accident we met with an interpreter in the person of a little Mexican lad, who, it appeared, would at least be able to hold communication for us with any Indian tribes we might meet. Vincenti, or, in better Spanish, *Vincente*, was a handsome well grown Mexican boy, but with a very artful expression of countenance; he had been for some years in the service of a Creek Indian of the name of Shiasem,⁵⁸ who had rewarded him with the present of a horse and free permission to return to his native country. He was perfectly well acquainted with the language of the Comanches and Kaddos [*sic*] and if the present afforded him a welcome opportunity of going home, his knowledge of languages made him extremely welcome to the Expedition.

Vincente, though he was but fourteen years old, had already seen many remarkable vicissitudes.⁵⁹ Of his parents and the home of his infancy, he had but a confused recollection. He had lived in a house where friendly *clothed* people surrounded him, and they called him Vincente; near the house were trees with fruit, many cows and horses, he used to be able to talk with the people, and there were some of the words they used (Spanish words) which had not yet escaped his memory. At night he used to sleep wrapt in blankets by the side of his mother. On the last night that he passed in that home, he was awakened by a dreadful yell, and he heard the screams of his mother, but she had vanished from his side, and the room was filled with wild painted men, who threw the furniture into the fire to make a blaze. One of the savages caught sight of little Vincente, then about four years old, and snatched him up, but a call from without was answered by a loud howl from within, and they all rushed out of the house and got

⁵⁸ Jesse Chisholm. The odd orthography is undoubtedly due to the fact that Möllhausen is writing in German. See footnote 50, *Whipple*, p. 261.

⁵⁹ Here follows the best account of the kidnapping of this Mexican boy. Whipple states Vincente was the "son of Demencio of Parras." Whipple employed Vincente as an interpreter for \$25 a month. In later years the lad was often referred to as the adopted son of Chisholm.

upon their horses. There was confusion, and terror, and darkness. Vincente felt himself lifted up and placed before one of the riders, the flames at the same moment burst out of what had been his home, and by the light of the burning house he saw that a troop of Indians were furiously driving away a herd of cattle.

They rode the whole night through, but in the morning made a short halt, and Vincente had a piece of dried meat and some water given him for breakfast. The journey was continued as fast as the cattle could be got forward and the little Mexican passed the day on the saddle before his captor, and the night under one blanket with him. They went on thus for many days, until they at last came to the village of the Indians, who, it appeared, were Comanches. Vincente was then stripped entirely naked, and given over to a dreadful looking woman, who placed him among a troop of Indian children, and from this school of savages the boy issued, wholly ruined for a tranquil civilised life.

Eight or nine years passed in this way, and then he was made over in barter from his Comanche owner to Shiasem, who took him with him to the settlements and employed him in various kinds of light service. The bright quick understanding of the boy had enabled him soon to master as much knowledge as could be had among the Creeks, and his good-natured master was now willing to afford him this opportunity of making himself useful as an interpreter, and at the same time of inquiring after his relations in Mexico; but Vincente seemed to rejoice more at the chance of falling in with his old tormentors, and being somehow revenged on them, than of treading again his native soil. That his Indian education had been by no means thrown away upon him may be inferred from his reply when one of us asked him what he would do if the Comanches should catch him again. Without a moment's hesitation, he said, "I would greet them as dear old friends; I would win their confidence, and accompany them on their plundering parties. But I would sleep with eyes and ears open, and on the first opportunity I could find I would poison some of them, or stab them in their sleep, and then ride away with their best horses."

The time of our sojourn at Fort Arbuckle passed very quickly; some of us made excursions to the neighbouring Delawares, or to the Canadian River, which we were now to lose for awhile, though to meet with again beyond the Antelope Hills; others went about botanising upon its desolate willow-covered banks, or searched about its broad sandy bed for a place deep enough to bathe or fish in with small nets. Now that we were so near the Indian country it was not likely that our hunts would be very productive, and the only game we could find here were horned frogs, and little lizards with steel blue tails. Our people were now practised well in the

use of the rifle and revolver, an exercise in which little Vincente would gladly have spent every day from morning till night; he too was now fully armed, and soon showed himself one of the best shots of the party, although he could not well use his rifle without a support. Amidst these occupations evening came on unperceived; and then, when all was quiet, the astronomers set to work at their observations of the newly discovered comet,⁶⁰ but the rest of the company gathered round the Black Beaver, and endeavoured, by artfully contrived questions, to elicit from him some anecdotes of former days; and when he did begin to tell a story in his simple truthful manner, every one listened with the greatest attention.

"What kind of hunting shall we find in the great plains?" asked one of them after a pause. "There's many a creature that you can go after, wanders about those prairies," answered the Black Beaver, "and especially there's the buffalo, countless herds of them; but at this time of year you won't often get an opportunity for a shot at them, as they are all going to the north. They find the sun here too warm for their shaggy hides, and by the time they are driven back by the snow storms in the autumn, you will have crossed the Rocky Mountains, and be in a country where no buffalo has ever grazed. They are shy of this mountain chain, and I never found, but in two places in the neighbourhood of passes, certain signs that the buffaloes have ventured through to the other side. You may find perhaps a grey old fellow of a bull here or there, but he will not be worth spurring your horse after,—his flesh would be tough, and you could at best only use his tongue."

Amidst such talk as this we wiled away the fine summer evenings at Camp Arbuckle; and we regretted more and more that we were not to have the benefit of the Black Beaver's experience on our journey.

On the 22nd of August, our Expedition left the fort, some of the least magnanimous of our party returning with the corn-dealers towards the east, and the rest turning their faces joyfully in the direction that the sun himself pointed out to them. The Black Beaver gave us the benefit of his escort for the first day, and brought us to a spot where, on close examination, the tracks of old waggon wheels were discovered. It was the path by which, years before this, some Delawares had led Captain Marcy. "Only go straight on along this road," said the Beaver, as he left us, "and you will come to the Rio Grande." Nobody but an Indian, certainly, would have thought of calling it a road, where the eye could distinguish nothing of the kind, and only the softest mocassims [*sic*]

⁶⁰ Whipple became very preoccupied with his astronomical observations in connection with this comet. It was first seen by the party on the evening of August 21st, and was observed almost nightly for several weeks.

permitted a slight ridge in the ground under the thick grass to be felt.

We followed, however, in the direction to which he had pointed, and journeyed on in the neighbourhood of Walnut Creek; now over far-stretching grassy uplands, now through deep-wooded ravines; it was still the "rolling" prairie that we were travelling on, but the rolling waves had now become mighty billows, and the beds of rustling brooks had changed into deep chasms, at the brink of which we often had to stop and consider how we should get to the other side. Willows and oaks shaded the scantily flowing streams; the last kind of tree, especially, is widely diffused over the neighbouring chains of hills, though it is no longer so lofty and vigorous as when it drinks its nourishment from a cool fertile soil, but a low, gnarled trunk that struggles in vain to keep the burning sunbeams from drying up its juices.

The wind, which was from the west, had been all day driving towards us clouds of smoke, which slowly floated before the breeze, or were more rapidly dispersed before a stronger gust. It was evident that as far as we could see from north to south, the prairie was in flames, and the fire was driven rapidly by the increasing wind over the high grass towards the east. Under these circumstances it was necessary to be exceedingly careful in our choice of a camping place for the night, and we thought we might count on being tolerably safe if we pitched our tents between two ravines not far from one another.⁶¹ These ravines were broad and deep, and their precipitous walls, down which poured several streams of water, were destitute of any vegetation that could offer nourishment to the flames; so that the westerly one might fairly be considered as a natural limit to the advance of the fiery tide.

Our cattle were driven down into the one lying eastward, to withdraw them from the sight of the fire, and obviate the danger of the panic, terror, and wild fight called a *Stampede*; and when they were safely disposed of, the greater part of our company betook themselves to the other side in order to watch the fire from the edge of the ravine, and extinguish in time any sparks that might be driven that way.

Although these fires in the prairies frequently arise from accident, or the carelessness of traveling or hunting Indians, it does sometimes happen that they are intentionally kindled by the inhabitants of the steppes, who burn great tracts of the plains to favour the growth of young vigorous grass. From among the singed stubble, fine blades shoot up in a few days, and the whole surface is soon clothed again in bright green, and has the appearance of a well cultivated cornfield where the young corn is just

⁶¹ Camp 22 was in the vicinity west of Wayne.

springing up; and then the Indians proceed thither with their herds of cattle, after they have first kindled a fire in another district.

It is, nevertheless, a matter of no unfrequent occurrence that one of these intentionally kindled fires proves the destruction both of the cattle and of the Indians themselves; for though any one can light the fire, at almost any part of the waving grassy plain, it is often beyond any human power to control it after it is lit, when a storm wind arises to drive it over the boundless surface.

As we sat thus at the edge of the ravine calmly watching the whirling clouds of smoke, and the flames that were now just visible in the distance, or observing the movements of the terrified animals that were hurrying through the high grass and seeking shelter in the ravine, we were suddenly startled by a cry of fire from the camp.

The effect of such a cry upon minds already excited by the scene we had been witnessing may be imagined, for every one knew that not only the success of the expedition, but the lives of those concerned in it, were imperilled by such an accident. We all rushed down to the camp, where, through the carelessness of the cooks, the nearest grass had been set on fire, and under the influence of the violent wind, the flames were spreading terrifically. Fortunately, the accident had happened on the east side of the tents and waggons, so that the chief danger was blown away by the wind, while on the other side the prairie fire counteracted the current of air, and approached the camp but slowly. Our whole company now formed a close rank, and following the rapidly spreading fire, stifled the flames by a brisk application of blankets, sacks, and articles of wearing apparel; and with considerable exertion the danger was at last overcome. Only a spark was to be seen here and there, whilst on the other side of the ravine the conflagration raged unchecked.

The flames had now advanced in a diagonal line to the western edge of the ravine, but the space was too wide for them to cross; the flying sparks went out when they had reached not more than half way, and we were now able to give our undisturbed attention to the majestic phenomenon before us, and watch the fire as it moved across the plain; first, while yet afar off, withering up the tracts of juicy grass before it, and then, at a touch, converting them into ashes.

The night as it came on showed us a sublime picture—a picture that can be adequately described by neither pen nor pencil. The vivid colour of the flames made the sky appear of the most intense black, while they shed a glowing red illumination on the grey

clouds of smoke that were rolling away, and changing their hue every moment as the fire was driven before stronger gusts of wind, or nourished by more or less luxuriant vegetation.

A peculiar disquieting sort of sound accompanies these prairie burnings; it is not thundering, or rushing, or roaring, but something like the distant hollow trembling of the ground when thousands of buffaloes are tearing and trampling over it with their heavy hoofs. It sounded threateningly to us in the camp, and it was with a thrilling kind of admiration we contemplated this awe-inspiring spectacle.

On the following morning our Expedition was on its march again in its accustomed order, but it had to journey for hours over the burnt surface, from which the waggon wheels and the stamping hoofs raised up a fine black ashy dust, that rendered respiration difficult both to men and horses; the complete calm and the heavy dew that had fallen during the night had quenched, but not altogether extinguished, the conflagration, and light clouds of smoke that ever and anon rose, and then dispersed in the clear atmosphere, betrayed that there were sparks still glimmering which only needed a breath to renew the scene of the previous day, and bring devastation over some yet unconsumed tract of country. The eye accustomed to rest on the pleasant fresh grass, is wearied by the dismal blackish grey of the burnt ground, and seeks in vain for some variety; the flowers have vanished, and the lizards and horned frogs, if alive, do not venture out of their holes. Only numerous skulls of wild animals long since bleached by the wind and now partly blackened by the fire, stare out of the singed stubble with their eyeless sockets, and awaken in the traveller, among other reflections that of the wonderful productiveness of the chase that from time immemorial has maintained the wild inhabitants of these steppes. Here lay a great buffalo skull with its huge horns still looking formidable, there, among colossal bones, a stately pair of antlers, which time seems to have turned to lime; but the buffalo's shaggy hide is probably hanging on the glossy copper-coloured shoulders of some Comanche, and the stately Virginian stag, and the crafty hunter that pursued him, have both long been dust.

At last we had left dust and ashes behind us, and again went rejoicing on our way through flowers and grass; but the light breeze from the west, at first scarcely perceptible, grew suddenly into a gust, that whirling over the plain sent up dust and ashes high into the air, and awakened again the slumbering element—roused it to continue its journey, and once more crackling and smoking, it pursued its devastating round towards the east.

The fire advanced very slowly, and occasioned only a short delay; the little *rodentia* could easily escape from it, but a troop of forked kites and brown falcons had nevertheless hastened thither, and

circling sportively about in the black smoke, and watching their opportunity shot down, snatched their frightened prey from before the flames, and carried it off in their sharp claws. Our people soon burnt clear a space amply large enough to contain our whole party, and as the flames approached they were checked by the bald strip, and opening, left us a wide secure passage. Again we were passing through dust and ashes, but not for long, and the far stretching train of waggons was soon moving across the green slopes in the neighbourhood of Walnut Creek, where all the life of the prairie appeared to have taken refuge.

In one ravine the leading stag moved composedly along with a troop of fat deer, and offered himself as a convenient target for the hunter, who was following his movements on the high bank. The white wolf was lying down exhausted in the shadow of the single tree, his dry tongue hanging out of his jaws, and gazing, without disturbing himself, at the muzzle of the weapon from which he was about to receive his death. The small groves were alive with families of turkeys; and large prairie hares were crossing the valleys in all directions, and vainly endeavouring, by laying down their long ears, to render themselves invisible.

Our airy tents were pitched on the edge of a cool well-watered ravine, and faint and exhausted with the sultry heat of the day and our long ride, we were lying about in groups in the shade, when our attention was attracted by two horsemen, who were advancing over the plain from the west, and directing their course straight towards our camp.⁶² In these wild regions one can only expect to meet with Indians, but every one anxiously awaited the arrival of the strangers, who, when they came up, rode at once fearlessly into our circle, leaped nimbly from their strong horses, and shook the hands held out to them in a friendly manner. They were two tall, slender young men, their limbs almost girlishly delicate, so that when you compared the strong bows they carried, with the small hands and slender wrists that had to manœuvre them, you could not help wondering that they should be able to draw the strong sinew and the feathered arrow to the ear. A light woollen blanket was wound round their hips, leaving the upper part of the body entirely bare; they wore leggings and mocassins of soft leather, and a quiver made of rich fur, and filled with poisoned arrows, was slung carelessly to their copper-coloured shoulders; their youthful Indian faces were set in a frame of coal black hair, and were not without an expression of subtlety and cunning; red and blue lines were drawn, in Indian artistic style, round their eyes and over their prominent cheek-bones, and their scalp locks were fashionably dressed with coloured feathers.

The newcomers belonged to the tribe of Wakos,⁶³ or Waekos, neighbours of the Wichita Indians, who live to the east of the

⁶² Camp 23 was at Dibble in McClain County.

⁶³ For brief history of the Waco, see Wright, . . . *Indian Tribes* . . . , pp. 253-4.

Wichita Mountains, in a village situated on the bank of a small river rising in that direction. They were now on a journey to the Canadian, to meet a barter-trader there, but having heard of our Expedition, had turned out of their way to pay us a visit. The Wakos and Wichitas⁶⁴ differ only in name, and in some slight varieties of dialect; their villages are built in the same style, and are only about a thousand yards from one another. Their wigwams, of which the Wichitas count forty-two, and the Wakos only twenty, look a good deal like haycocks, and are constructed with pliable poles, eighteen or twenty feet long, driven into the ground in a circle of twenty-five feet diameter; the poles are then bent together and fastened to one another at the top, and the spaces between filled with plaited willow twigs and turf, a low aperture being left for a door, and one above for a chimney. A place is hollowed out in the centre for a fireplace and round this, and a little raised, are placed the beds of the inhabitants of the hut; which, when covered with good buffalo skins, make tolerable resting places. Each of these wigwams is generally occupied by two families; and the Wako tribe is reckoned at about two hundred, that of the Wichitas at not less than eight hundred members.

These Indians practise agriculture; and beans, peas, maize, gourds, and melons are seen prospering very well round their villages, though their only agricultural implement is a small rake. With this, they manage to get a little seed into the ground, and the fruitful soil repays the trifling trouble with the most abundant harvests. Scarcely, however, has the melon become eatable, and the cobs of the Indian corn formed, than these thoughtless creatures begin to consume it, and hold feasts that only end when the whole stock has been eaten up,—and then for the rest of the year they have to live as well as they can by the chase. They are skilful [*sic*] buffalo hunters, and, like most of the prairie tribes, shoot their game with arrows from their horses. Those we met had large herds of horses and mules grazing near, the brands on which showed that their lawful owners lived many days' journey off in Southern Texas.

Although our two Indian visitors entered our tents in a very friendly manner, they could not be induced to remain the night with us, though we would gladly have persuaded them to do so, as having missed our way, we should have liked to employ them the following day as guides.

Shortly before we broke up our camp on the following morning, an Indian of the Kechie⁶⁵ tribe made his appearance. These people also live near the Wichita Mountains, and can bring about a hundred

⁶⁴ For brief history of the Wichita, see *ibid.*, pp. 255-60.

⁶⁵ The approved spelling of "Kechie" is *Kichai*. For a brief history of the tribe, see *ibid.*, pp. 164-6.

warriors into the field. Guided⁶⁶ by this new acquaintance, our procession found its way back to the old road, thickly overgrown as it was with grass; and by following it, we found it possible to cross the deep full streams at places where the banks had been formerly cut down and trees felled, so that a passage could now be effected with very little labour. We had, however, to make very short marches, as the path was continually crossed by the small rivers, which, in manifold windings, intersected the lowlands, watering a lovely district that for fertility can hardly be surpassed.

"You have been often in these prairies before, friend Dutchman?" said the Doctor one day to his companion.

"Yes," was the reply; "many a hundred mile have I travelled in them. I have seen the plains on the Nebraska under all aspects."

"Doctor," cried the narrator, here suddenly interrupting himself, and seizing his companion by the shoulder, while he pointed with the other hand to some distant object, "look over that first hill there, and you will see a wood. Run your eye along that dark streak, and at the end of it you will see some black specks,—like bushes standing apart, those are buffaloes!" The old Doctor's sportsman-like ardour was aroused in a moment, especially as he saw some horsemen from the front of the cavalcade spring forward and gallop in the direction indicated, where a small herd of buffaloes was quietly reposing in the high grass.

"Hurrah! buffaloes!" exclaimed the eager old gentleman, cocking his rifle, and like his companions, making vigorous use of his spurs. To overtake a herd of frightened buffaloes with mules would, however, not be very possible; and it was therefore determined to approach them unperceived, and get within range under cover of a hill. But each of the twelve or sixteen enthusiastic hunters was animated by a natural desire to be the first to fire a successful shot at this superb game, and each, therefore, endeavoured to push before his comrades. The Doctor broke silence first by firing off his rifle, and exclaiming, "Well, if I didn't hit the buffaloes, at any rate I fired the first shot;" and a loud laugh, in which the good-natured old gentleman joined with all his heart, was the reward of his facetiousness, as turning their smoking animals, the disappointed hunters rode slowly towards the train of waggons, now just visible in the remote distance, and for a long time their talk was only of buffaloes.

Numerous herds of these animals still animate the boundless prairies to the west, and extend their wanderings from Canada to the coasts of the Gulf of Mexico, and from the Missouri to the Rocky Mountains. It is probable that the great mass of them

⁶⁶ The Kichai guide was of great help, relates Whipple. He led the party back without difficulty to the Marcy trail and then as far as Marcy's Camp 28.

regularly proceed northward in the spring, and in the autumn return to the warmer regions; but a few may be found scraping away the snow from their food near the sources of the Yellow Stone, and even further north; and there are also others that contrive to subsist through the summer in Texas, on the grass, burnt up as it is by the heat of the sun; but these are but few, and usually old bulls, which have been too stiff, or too lazy to follow the black columns of their comrades.

In former days, when the buffalo was a kind of domestic animal among the Indians, no decrease was perceptible in the countless herds; on the contrary, they increased and multiplied in the luxuriant pastures; but when the white found their way into these regions, the thick soft skin of the buffalo pleased them; they found some parts of its flesh to their taste, and both articles promised to yield abundant profit in civilised countries. In order to obtain them, a desire for the intoxicating and glittering productions of the whites was excited amongst the dwellers in the prairie, and small quantities of these tempting articles offered in return. Then the devastation began; thousands of buffaloes were killed for their tongues only, and still more frequently for their shaggy hides; and in a few years there was an evident falling off in their numbers. The careless Indian never thinks of the future, but lives only for the present and its enjoyments; and he now no longer needs to be urged to the chase, but will pursue this noble animal while there is one left. The time, perhaps, is not far distant when these imposing herds will live only in remembrance, and 300,000 Indians, as well as millions of wolves, deprived of their chief support, and wild with hunger, will become the scourge of the civilised and settled parts of the country.

Buffalo hunting is not only the chief occupation of the prairie Indian, but also his highest enjoyment. Mounted on a swift, strong horse, itself probably but just caught, he can overtake almost any animal that shows itself, and delights in sending his deadly arrows among the flying herd while at full gallop.

When the Indian proposes to overtake a herd of buffaloes, he strips himself and his horse of every article that can be dispensed with; leaves saddle and clothing behind, and takes with him only a raw leather thong, forty feet long, which is fastened to the jaws of the horse, and then, being thrown over his neck, drags at its full length behind on the ground. This serves to recover the horse in case of his getting loose by the fall of his rider or any other accident.

The hunter carries his bow, and as many arrows as he can conveniently hold in his left hand, and in his right a heavy whip, by the merciless use of which he urges his horse among the flying herd, and up to the side of a fat cow or young bull. The docile steed soon understands the intention of his rider, and needs no further urging, but places himself near the chosen prey, so as to

give the hunter an opportunity of burying his arrow up to the feather in some soft part; but scarcely has the arrow whistled from the bow, and the sharp iron found its way through the curly hide, than the horse springs away as far as he can go, to escape the horns of his now furious enemy, and seek out another victim. Thus the hunt proceeds with the rapidity of a storm wind, until the exhaustion of the horse warns the wild hunter to put some restraint on his ardour. The wounded animals in the meantime have been left by the herd, and are lying exhausted or dying on the route over which the wild hunt thundered but a few minutes before. The wives of the hunters follow in their track, and are soon busily employed in cutting up the game, and conveying the best pieces and the skins to their wigwams, where they cut the meat into thin strips, dry it, and tan the skins in their simple manner.

The greater portion of the animals slaughtered is left to the wolves, which are always found in considerable numbers in the train of the buffalo.

The chase is, however, not the only mode in which the Indian carries on his endless war with the buffalo. Another plan is to draw a wolf's skin over his head and the upper part of his body, and go crawling on his hands and knees, pushing his weapon before him, and approach the game in a zig-zag line. The long hair that hangs over the buffalo's eyes prevents his being very clear sighted, and as long as his keen olfactory organs give him no warning of the presence of the Indian beneath the disguise, the enemy will often succeed in getting near enough to kill him without disturbing the rest of the herd.

The poor buffalo is persecuted at all seasons of the year, even when snow storms have drawn a covering over the hollows, and rendered a hunt with horses impracticable. The herd at these times can only work its way slowly through the deep snow; but the Indian has contrived broad plaited snow-shoes, which he fastens to his swift feet, and so skims over the uncertain ground after the laboriously wading giant, and kills the now defenceless animal with the lance. More buffaloes, however, are sacrificed to the uncontrollable passion for the chase than to real necessity, and the war of extermination against this fine ornament of the prairie is carried on in the most unmerciful manner. There will probably be no thought of forbearance till the last buffalo has disappeared, and shortly afterwards, the last red-skin, and with them the only native poetry of the great North American continent.

Wherever Providence has placed living creatures, it has afforded them the means of existence, and in these vast plains, from which civilisation long shrank back, in the belief that they were desolate, there lived thousands of human beings, who had no wish that they were not able to gratify. They lived in plenty, for countless herds

of buffaloes were given to them, and to the buffaloes again fat pastures; but the thirst for gain found its way into these solitudes, trampled the glorious works of the Creator into the dust, and will one day look proudly on the roaring locomotive, rushing through the prairie, on its great errand of uniting together the two opposite oceans.

Our would-be buffalo hunters, with the old Doctor at their head, reached the camp at a late hour.⁶⁷ It was pitched between the sources of the Walnut Creek and the Deer Creek, and consequently about the middle of the Cross Timbers, the strips of forest that form such a remarkable feature of this region.⁶⁸ These strips begin at the Arkansas, and extend in a south-westerly direction to the Brazos, a length of more than 400 miles, with a breadth varying from five to thirty. Throughout their whole extent the Cross Timbers show the same character; the trees are chiefly dwarf oaks, standing with such wide spaces between them, that waggons can drive through with great ease; the soil is sandy and barren, and only in the neighbourhood of great rivers, intersected by a few brooks; but wherever they are found, the oaks assume a loftier, more vigorous growth, and also tolerate willows as their neighbours. Where heavy rains have laid bare the ground, you see a reddish loam, crossed by white streaks of gypsum, which broaden as they proceed westward, until they reach the enormous bed of gypsum that begins at Fort Mary and the Natural Mounds.⁶⁹

These Cross Timbers form, to a certain extent, the boundary between the lands adapted for cultivation, and the barren steppe, as well as between the civilised and wild inhabitants; for eastward of this natural boundary are found numerous brooks and springs, which unite to form small rivers, and then carry their waters to the Canadian or the Wichita [Washita], leaving everywhere abundance and blessing behind them. Superb trees of the most luxurious growth mirror themselves in these waters, and flowery meadows of indescribable loveliness border their banks. Westward of the Cross Timbers stretch the great plains in their sublime monotony.

The following day's march brought us to the neighbourhood of Deer Creek;⁷⁰ a river that certainly deserves its name, for as our noisy procession approached, fat deer, roused from their slumber among the high grass, were seen breaking from their covert, and

⁶⁷ Camp 25 near Tuttle.

⁶⁸ Caroline Thomas Foreman, *The Cross Timbers* (Muskogee, 1947).

⁶⁹ An unusual formation located in Caddo County a few miles southwest of Hydro. The principal butte was named Rock Mary by Lieuts. Simpson, Morrison and other junior officers in honor of Mary Conway, a popular young member of the 1849 party of emigrants. To call the same "Fort Mary" would be a misapprehension. For the naming of Rock Mary, see Grant Foreman, *Marcy and the Gold Seekers* (Norman, 1939), pp. 215, 306.

⁷⁰ Now Boggy Creek, a branch of the Canadian in northern Grady County.

bounding away through the many entangling creepers to the river side, to hide themselves in the thick woods. Troops of turkeys were stepping gravely across the open space, or strutting about proudly with their fan-like tails spread out, glittering in the sun with all the colours of the rainbow; but, alarmed by the sound of the waggon wheels, they fled incontinently, with outstretched necks, and hid themselves among the bushes, where nothing but a slight occasional rustle betrayed their presence. Game was now to be had in superfluity; and our long-drawn cavalcade scattered about in all directions, and shots were heard from far and near. Nobody could resist the temptations here offered; the popping went on all the rest of the day, the sportsmen working their way panting through whole fields of mulberry bushes; and in the evening we lay in groups round the fires, praising the excellence of the fresh game, that speedily vanished before our vigorous appetities, driving away the troublesome insects with clouds of tobacco smoke, and reconing the various distances that lay between us and our homes.

The passage of Deer Creek⁷¹ was easily effected, but there was more difficulty with the little streams formed by the numerous springs of this region, which flowed from all directions towards the river, and whose deeply hollowed beds formed serious obstructions in our path.

A general rise of the ground was now perceptible; and since the Cross Timber track was nearly passed, the woods had become more scanty, and a wider view was obtained over the face of the country, which again resembled long rolling waves.

We made a good day's march from the point where Deer Creek is crossed, to the spot where you first catch sight of Rock Mary and the Natural Mounds, a group of bold steep hills in the thenceforward treeless plain. Up to this point no particular change in the character of the scenery is perceptible; there is the same juicy green in the prairies, the same low gnarled oaks in the woods, the same level road over which waggons and horses proceed at the same steady pace.

We turned out of a ravine covered with low oak woods, and saw the wide, boundless plain stretching out before us. It was the first time we had seen the horizon line touching and mingling with that of the distant prairie. The far-stretching outline was only broken by the Natural Mounds—a group of hills of a conical shape; which, by the effect of the mirage then prevailing, assumed the most wonderful forms: sometimes seeming to rise out of a broad lake; sometimes to hang down from the bright sunny horizon.

The wide plain now lay extended before us, like the ocean in its sublime tranquillity; a few dried-up hollows and rushing streams had still to be passed, but they presented no formidable obstacle to our

⁷¹ August 28th.

course; for instead of the former sandy loam, a firm red sandstone lay near the surface of the ground, and had opposed too solid an obstacle to the gnawing tooth of time, and the wild rush of the waters, to allow of the formation of deep ravines, such as are found on the east side of the Cross Timbers. Even this rock, however, had yielded to the influence of thousands of years, and been washed and worn down in particular places; where harder and more impenetrable veins crossed the soft sandstone, the most remarkable forms had arisen, sometimes so distinctly wrought out that you would hardly imagine you had not before you the work of human hands, and of capricious human fancy directing the chisel. Especially striking was the passage from one of the hollows I have mentioned, into a larger one, where, on the smooth sandstone rock stood some formations, appearing at a distance like a number of cupolas, but on a nearer view rather like gigantic urns or vases. They were from eight to ten feet high, at the largest parts from four to six feet in diameter, and formed of a deep red sandstone; there was first a broad round foot, then a column, at first slender, but increasing rapidly in circumference, and then, where it attained its greatest breadth, suddenly running to a point, as if to form the cover of the vase. When we had passed this place, our road lay towards the Natural Mounds, which appeared much nearer than they really were, from the perfect level of the steppe.

Mile after mile was passed, and the sun was sinking in the west, when our train of waggons passed Rock Mary to the northward, winding among the hills, westward of which our camp⁷² was to be pitched for the night, near a brook whose vicinity had long been manifested by the presence of cottonwood trees. The Natural Mounds, the chief of which bears the name of Rock Mary, are a chain of conical hills, lying separate, but scattered in a direction from north-west to south-east; they are all about equal in height, namely, about eighty feet, and covered with a horizontal stratum of red sandstone. They appear to be the remains of a former elevated plain, which has been preserved from complete destruction by the upright mass of rock contained in it; and this seems the more probable, because on the flat plain to the west, you find what looks like a range of columns; consisting of blocks of sandstone lying so regularly one upon another, that it is not easy at first to be convinced that these—not perhaps imposing, but certainly surprising structures, have been formed solely by the hand of nature, or left thus after a comparatively recent convulsion.

There are twelve or fourteen of these columns still standing, and more that are gradually being worn away; the largest attain a height of about twenty-five feet; some consisting of vast square blocks of free-stone, whilst others, of the same height, have not a diameter of more than two or three feet, and sooner or later will fall.

⁷² Camp 29, probably in the extreme southeast corner of Custer County.

A spring of water, as clear as crystal, trickled out over a bed of firm sandstone, in the neighbourhood of this colonnade, and was soon swelled into a rivulet by other veins that opened all over the rock, and the rivulet has become a strong though small river by the time it pours itself into the Canadian. This was the boundary between the sweet and the salt waters, and on the following day we entered on the great gypsum region, which passes with reason for the greatest in the North American continent, and is only exceeded in length (according to Darwin) by the great bed of gypsum in Chili, on the Western coast of South America. Where it begins, at the Arkansas, it has a breadth of fifty miles, and it extends in a south-westerly direction across the Canadian to the sources of the Red River, then over a part of the elevated plain, (*Llano Estacado*), touches on the Colorado, and then stretches out beyond the Brazos and Pecos, to a length of at least 400 miles. Wherever, on this tract, the gypsum comes to the surface, it shows itself in every conceivable form: sometimes as white veins, which intersect the red loam in the deeply-hollowed beds of the rivers; sometimes in masses like alabaster lying on the surface of the plain, with such deep openings and chasms, that you can easily go far down into them; and then again as transparent, finely foliated, sparry plates of selenite, of several feet square in surface, and only two inches in thickness, so that it would be easy to make large window panes out of them. They are so employed in the towns of the Pueblo Indians, the descendants of the ancient Aztecs, on the Rio Grande, all the apertures for light being closed with them; and these panes have the advantage of allowing the occupants of the house to look out, without it being possible for the keenest eye to see what is passing in the interior of the feebly-lighted rooms. The water of the above-mentioned rivers, which rise in the gypsum region, have always a taste of soda and magnesia, in some places so strong as to make them almost undrinkable, and to produce an evident effect on the health. For this reason, travellers on approaching this desert, make what haste they can across a tract where the sight of cool bright, and yet undrinkable water, is painfully tantalising, when they consider how many a toilsome day's march they have to make through an otherwise waterless prairie.

Our expedition did not, therefore, leave the sweet springs of the Natural Mounds without making the necessary preparations. In order to have recourse as seldom as possible to the bitter water, the skins, and casks carried with us for the purpose, and even the cooking utensils were filled with good water, and when all was ready for our departure, and our horses saddled and watered were standing round, one after another of the party was seen going down to the spring, and taking in such long draughts of the delicious fluid, that they seemed to be quenching their thirst for days and weeks beforehand.

At last our cavalcade got in motion again; the road over the plain was excellent; the Natural Mounds and Rock Mary were left behind in the blue distance, and as on the wide ocean, the eye ranged round a circular line, formed by the horizon and the prairie. A sublime repose, indeed, a deathlike stillness reigned around, even the noise of the waggons seemed to die away in the infinite space. The scene was strange and new—almost too new to awaken more than a vague general interest.

The horsemen had left the train of waggons, and rode on confidently over the short grass; there was no more fear of their losing the way, for they must have gone almost a day's journey to get out of sight of their companions; and though some columns of smoke, rising in the west, denoted the presence there of some human beings, they were so far off that no precaution was necessary. A troop of Kiovas [*sic*] or Comanches could not have come nearer than three miles unperceived.

The small swells and inequalities of surface that showed themselves here and there, were almost destitute of vegetation, but glittered all over in the rays of the sun. Many a one of the party was induced to turn his horse that way in order to examine the place, and search for supposed treasures; but on closer investigation they proved to be nothing more than semi-transparent crystalline fragments of gypsum. A troop of these inquiring persons who were pursuing their way, in the eagerness of their talk, at a rather brisker pace than the rest, and had got considerably in advance of the slowly-rolling waggons and their escort of foot soldiers, made a halt upon one of these glittering hills, and alighting from their mules, left them to crop what they could, with only the precaution of leaving the long leathern thongs trailing on the ground, that they might easily catch them again; and determined to rest, and await the arrival of the lost stragglers. The geologist,⁷³ in the meantime, hammered away lustily at the rocks; the doctor, who was never wanting, instituted a search for plants; the topographer gave himself a great deal of trouble to note down on the chart some variations in the level of the plain; and the German naturalist toiled, in the sweat of his brow, to roll over blocks of gypsum in hopes of discovering snakes and lizards, and transferring them to his spirit bottles. Scarcely had the old doctor reached the top of the hill than he called out, joyfully: "Here! come here, all of ye, the earth is split open here and we can get inside!" We did not let him wait long, and on coming to the spot really found a wide funnel-shaped opening in the ground, which, at a depth of twelve feet down, enlarged and showed entrances to low caves and chasms. As soon

⁷³ Jules Marcou was born at Salins, France, April 20, 1824. He joined the faculty of the Sorbonne in 1846, and two years later came to America under the auspices of the Jardin des Plantes. He married an American, and lived at Cambridge, Massachusetts, until his death in 1898.

as the first surprise was over we made preparations to descend. The rough alabaster-like gypsum formation of the walls offered points of support enough for our hands and feet, and in a short time the whole party was below, endeavouring to find an entrance through the low passages into the nearest grottoes; but they were pitch dark within, and the marks of the feet of wild animals were pretty plainly impressed on the soft sand of the floor, so that it did not appear to us quite advisable to thrust ourselves in blindfold. Fortunately, one of us found that he had got with him in his hunting pouch the means of kindling a light, so after a little discussion, another of the party determined to lead the way, and crawled accordingly, with his comrades behind him, on his hands and knees, into the nearest passage, holding the light in one hand, and with the other cautiously pushing forward his revolver. The narrow path soon led to a lofty, spacious grotto, whose vaulted roof rested on two irregular pillars; it was very cold, but showed some beautiful and picturesque formations. Here, large masses hung from the roof in the form of stalactites—there, curiously perforated fragments rose from the floor;—in one place the wall was cleft from top to bottom, in another appeared the opening to an inner grotto—not large enough, however, for a man to enter—and at every step made by the explorers some new and interesting phenomenon presented itself, the white rocks glimmering and glittering in the faint light like masses of ice and snow. All the passages opening into this grotto seemed to lead into the open air again, but they were only large enough to allow of the passage of wolves and wild cats, who would certainly have made their way out as we approached. Some of the grottoes we did examine, but without finding any thing remarkable.

The journey through this gypsum region lasted five days: towards the end of the time the want of good water was much felt, and every one had to quench his thirst with a bitter draught. Unfortunately it was found not only that the thirst became more troublesome than ever, but a general feeling of indisposition prevailed through the party, and the food, which seemed also affected by a disagreeable flavour, became quite distasteful to us. Under these circumstances it will not seem surprising that much of our accustomed good humour and cheerfulness disappeared, and that we jogged along, with as much patience as we could, but in a very dull mood.

When we got to within two days' journey of the Antelope hills, the land of the gypsum region, and at the same time the boundary between northern Texas and the lands of the Indians, the formation appeared to be undergoing a change, for the small elevations were no longer covered with fragments of gypsum, but with fossil oyster-shells. This continued, however, only for a short time, and then the plain resumed its former character.

The mules and the small herd of cattle we had with us were well content, for the salt taste of the water was to them an agreeable condiment, and the grass was plentiful though not high. Scantly watered as the district was, we could manage every evening to reach a brook, which offered sufficient for our necessities, while our cattle found food on its banks. All these streams, including the most considerable of them, the Gypsum Creek,⁷⁴ hastened in various windings to the Wichita [Washita] and Canadian. They were swarming with fish of many species, amongst which we particularly distinguished the *Chaetodon rostratus*,⁷⁵ armed with its tremendous row of teeth; this creature appeared to share the dominion of the waters with the soft-shelled coriaceous turtle.

The Kioway Indians hunt these regions, but the boundary between their grounds and those of their western neighbours, the Comanches, is not determined. The great tribes of the Comanches and Kioways live on a friendly footing with one another, and extend their ravages and their hunting expeditions from the settlements of the Shawnees to the Rio Grande, and from the Nebraska or Flat River to the colonies on the Mexican Gulf.

We reached the Canadian at last; and at the moment when its broad mirror was first spread out before us, we caught in the blue distance a glimpse of the misty Antelope hills.⁷⁶ They vanished again from our sight however, when, in order to get to the river bank, we descended between some wild hills into the valley.

A great change took place in the aspect of the river as we approached it. The dull brick-coloured fluid moved slowly through its broad bed, scarcely covering the sand that rolled along. The holes that we scraped, to get water for drinking, were immediately sanded up again, and a few drops were sufficient to inform us that the waters of the Canadian, which at a lower part of its course were fit for every purpose, were here as unpleasant as that of any of the salt streams that paid tribute to it. We redoubled our haste, therefore, to get to the Antelope hills, that when we had reached their western declivity we might revel once more in the pure element of which we had so long been deprived.

The Antelope or Boundary Hills are six table-shaped elevations, rising 150 feet above the plain; their form is regular, in some oval,

⁷⁴ Probably East Barnitz Creek in Custer County.

⁷⁵ Girard in his report on "Fishes," *op. cit.*, p. 110, explains his adoption of the name *Squamipennes* instead of *Chaetodontidae* for this "Family" of fishes. The specimen caught in Gypsum Creek by Möllhausen is described on p. 209 (*ibid.*) with special mention of the developed "maxilar teeth," and listed by Girard under *Pimelodus Felinus*.

⁷⁶ The Antelope Hills, now in Roger Mills County, are very near the 100th Meridian that marks the western boundary of Oklahoma. These noted hills were once the landmark for the international boundary line between Spanish and American territory.

in others round; they look like gigantic ramparts, are all covered by a horizontal stratum or table of white sandstone, eighteen feet thick, and are without doubt the remains of elevated plateaus, which here rise in so remarkable a manner above the boundless plain. Each of these ramparts may be ascended at certain parts, and when you stand on the platform and look round, your view is bounded only by the blending line of the horizon and the grassy plain. How grand and calm, how sublime and yet how oppressive, is the prospect!

With no more variety of scenery than this, our journey continued for many days,⁷⁷ and the monotony was only seldom broken by the appearance of an isolated conical hill, or table-shaped rock, which, on account of its rarity, we regarded with great interest and attentively examined.

The prairie dog, as it is called, though in fact it is no dog at all, but a marmot, is certainly one of the most curious of the living creatures found in these regions. It was named dog, *petit chien*, by the old Canadian trappers, on account of its peculiar cry, somewhat resembling the bark of a small dog, and the name has continued in use to the present day. The almost incredible extent of the settlements, or villages as they are called, of these peaceful little inhabitants of the earth, can be appreciated when you find that for days and days together you are travelling among small hills, every one of which marks an establishment of this kind. The single dwellings are generally eighteen or twenty feet apart, and the hillock at the entrance of each consists of a good waggon-load of earth, which has gradually thrown up into the light of day by the little inhabitants in constructing their subterranean abodes. Some habitations have one, others two entrances, and the firmly trodden path leading from one to the other gives rise to the conjecture that relations of friendship must subsist among these lively little animals. Their choice of a site for their villages appears to be determined by the presence of a peculiar kind of short crisp grass, which flourishes on these elevated plains, and which forms their sole nourishment; and their populous republics are to be found even on the lofty table lands of Mexico, in places where for many miles round there is not a drop of water, and where no rain falls for many months. Water can only be obtained there by digging to a depth of a hundred feet, so that it is to be presumed that the prairie dog does not need it, but is satisfied with the moisture afforded by an occasional heavy dew. The winter they doubtless pass in sleep, for they lay up no store for that season, and as the grass is withered in the autumn, and the ground afterwards hard bound in frost, they cannot obtain their food in the customary manner. When they feel that their sleepy time is approaching, which is commonly towards the last days

⁷⁷ Möllhausen did not give strict attention to the daily camp sites nor did he make an effort to include references to each day's journey. The party was in Oklahoma until September 7th, and on that day without doubt crossed the 100th Meridian.

of October, they close all the entrances to their abode to protect themselves against the winter's cold, and then settle themselves to their long sleep, and do not wake again till the warm spring days recall them to joyous life. The Indians say that the prairie dog does sometimes open the doors of its house during the cold weather, but that this is a sure sign of warmer days approaching.

A small species of burrowing owl is often found as a joint tenant of these subterranean dwellings, and appears to live on good terms with the small quadrupeds who inhabit them; but the owl is more common in the villages that have been abandoned by their original occupants. The prairie rattle-snake also sometimes introduces himself; but it is a great mistake to imagine, as has sometimes been done, that he comes as a friendly visitor; and when the unpleasant sound indicating the presence of the poisonous reptile is heard from one of the villages, you may be sure that if it had not been previously forsaken by its tiny population, the rattle-snake has either driven them out or devoured them.

These little colonies present a curious appearance if you can succeed in getting near before their sentinels have given the alarm. As far as the eye can reach there is a busy life and bustle going on; a little yellow brown personage, something like a squirrel, is sitting upon every hillock, with his little tail sticking up, and in everlasting motion, while thousands of small voices unite in chorus.