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CHAPTER XXIII.

ELY MOORE REPLIES TO S. M. CROCKETT.—WAS BLUE JACKET A SAINT?—THE BARBER MURDER.

SOMETIME ago an interesting letter from the pen of S. M. Crockett was published, and in it a former letter from Ely Moore was criticised. Mr. Moore prepared answer which is as follows:

IN REPLY.

"My attention has been called to letters recently published in the JEFFERSONIAN GAZETTE from the ready and able pen of my long ago acquaintance, S. M. Crockett. Mr. Crockett's early recollections are in the main correct, and modestly non-partisan, which lend both force and virtue to his writing. Would that all who are re-threshing their early recollections of Douglas county might emulate Mr. Crockett's unprejudiced style—tell the truth, let the blow reach its mark, for the war is over.

"However, Bro. Crockett gently, soothingly, almost, rubs the outsole of my skin the wrong way in questioning the language used by the 'Sachem' Henry Blue Jacket. I take it there are times when even such stout believers as the God-fearing Henry might lapse, bubble over, and fall into a *lapsus linguæ* so contagious in the days of the early '50s. Be that as it may. I am quite positive I quoted him *verbatim*.

"Permit me, friend Crockett, to adjust your memory as to the killing of Thomas W. Barber. Understand me, I do not in the least attempt to shield, but most emphatically condemn, those who were guilty of Mr. Barber's death. But to the facts.

"Just before the sad murder of Barber I had purchased a fine horse from a Wea Indian. This horse A. J. Rodrigue, postmaster at Lecompton, took a fancy to. I sold him to Rodrigue, and he in a few days, sold him to General Geo. W. Clark. Clark at once took him home and picketed him a short distance from his house. During the night the horse was stolen. The lariat had been cut, the knife being found by the picket-pin. Clark and his hired man traced the track of three horses leading towards Mr. Conner's, now the Justus Howell place, thence to the creek east of J. H. Harrison's claim, where they lost the trail. They then started home, but before reaching there were overtaken by Capt. Cal. Bailey, a merchant of Lecompton, and a Free State man. Bailey told Clark his horse was in a livery stable in Lawrence. The next day Clark called on Bailey, Rodrigue and myself and desired us to visit Lawrence with him to identify the horse. Clark and his party, for he always had followers, started for Lawrence before Rodrigue, Bailey or myself could leave our business. I was the last to start, and did not overtake Clark until after Barber had been killed, but Rodrigue and Bailey were but a few rods from Clark when the fatal shot was fired. Thus it will be seen there were other eye witnesses besides Mr. Crockett. Again, the Clark party were on their way to Lawrence, and Barber and friends on their way home in Kanwaka. Before the parties met Clark remarked, 'That looks like my horse the man in the lead is riding.' As the parties come together Clark halted Barber, repeating, 'That looks like my horse.' (This is the language Clark claimed to have used upon approaching Thomas W. Barber, but for its truth I do not vouch.) Some harsh words followed, and as the Barber party passed west and Clark's party east, Clark—the impetuous fool—threw his revolver over his shoulder and fired. As we all know, the shot killed poor Barber. Both Bailey and Rodrigue stated that Thomas W. Barber did not retreat with his brother and Mr. Pierson, but remained in a wordy war with Clark until his friends were removed a hundred yards or more. [See J. N. Holloway's History of Kansas, p. 245.] So it will be seen that Geo. W. Clark and not James N. Burns, fired the fatal shot. That was the emphatic statement of both Rodrigue and Bailey, and has never been disputed.

"Again my friend Crockett has slipped a cog in his recollections as regards the Fort Titus affair. He has gotten parts of two stories mixed. Colonel Titus was not out reconnoitering the night before Fort Titus was taken. Mrs. Titus was at our house in Lecompton that night, as she intended to leave for her Florida home early the next morning. It so happened I was corporal of the guard that night, and about seven o'clock p. m. I passed Colonel Titus and wife through the pickets into Lecompton, and four o'clock a. m. passed Titus out to his home south of

Lecompton. The ambush of Titus was long before Fort Titus was taken.

"The hallucination of Colonel Sam'l. Walker that his house was to be attacked, not his first home, that had been destroyed, led to some trouble and much laughter. Walker had been told in Lawrence one day that his house would be taken by the Pro-Slavery men before morning. To resist such a calamity, he invited a dozen or so well-armed neighbors to spend the night with him. At about ten o'clock that night a party of some fifteen men started from Lecompton for the Wakarusa to relief of a Mr. Treadwell, U. S. surveyor. The field notes of the original survey of two townships south and west of Oliver Barber's had been returned to the Surveyor General incomplete, failing to give the number of acres contained in the lots or fractional pieces thrown on the west and north of a township in surveying. The Surveyor General, at the request of the land officers, for there were many settlers in those townships who wished to file on their lands, and could not do so until a re-survey had been made, sent a Mr. Treadwell with ten or twelve men to aid him in surveying, but before the work had been started a party from Lawrence visited his camp and bid him leave, asserting his surveyors' paraphernalia was a mere ruse, and that they were there to jump the claims of Free State men. During the parley between the Lawrence faction and the surveyors, one of Treadwell's men, (McMullen), stole from camp and reached Lecompton late in the afternoon. McMullen reported to the Surveyor General and Governor, and they to the land officers, giving the reason why the survey had not been prosecuted, and asked for relief. These gentlemen joined in a written statement to the Free State men setting forth that Treadwell was a bona fide U. S. Surveyor, and was simply complying with a request of the land officers to re-survey the land that settlers might intelligently file on their claims. After much solicitation on the part of the land officers, the Governor put Capt. Bill Donaldson in charge of a dozen men to deliver the letter of explanation to the proper parties. Three or four of the men under Donaldson were Free State men—Morton, Waffle and Lightcap. The squad left Lecompton about nine o'clock p. m. on a lovely moonlight night. It appears there was no military order of march, as when they reached about in front of Walker's house the advance halted for 'Tennessee' Caldwell, who was city marshall of Lecompton, and McMullen to come up, for Donaldson wished to consult McMullen whether or not to go directly south by Cree's, or east and then south by Coleman's. Just as 'Tenny' and McMullen rode up by Donaldson's side, Walker and his party, to use a sportsmans phrase, took a pot-shot into the crowd, believing them to be the raiders who were to destroy his home, when in fact no such act was thought of. If I remember correctly the fusillade resulted in one dead horse, one or two wounded, and Rodrigue and Waffle taken prisoners. The ball that killed 'Tenny's' horse passed through his quart bottle of Kentucky Honey Dew, which deplorable circumstance he always related with great sorrow and a tear in his mouth. When 'Tenny's' horse fell he started on a double-quick for Lecompton. Donaldson called upon him to halt, but 'Tenny' keeping up his pace looked over his shoulder and shouted in reply: 'Come on, Cap., Come on, Cap., there's no time to pass c-o-m-p-l-i-m-e-n-t-s.'

"Though many pages of history have been written and much political capital made over 'the dastardly attack upon Colonel Walker,' the above was all there was to it, and at the time it took place was considered a good joke on Sam. Walker."