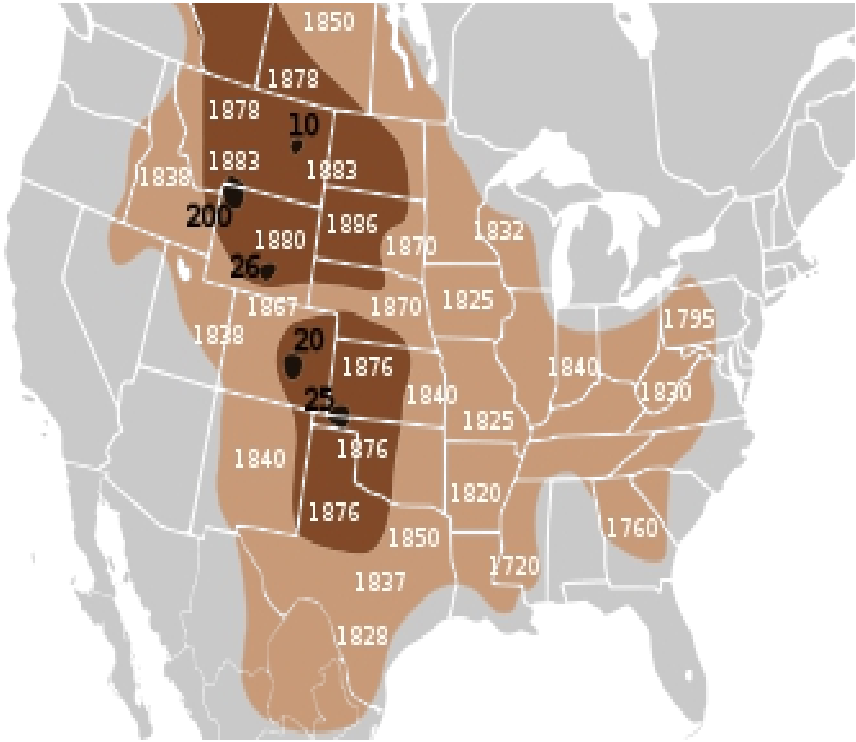


# **DAY OF THE BUFFALO**



**BY BILL RENFRO**



**MAP OF WHERE BUFFALO  
ROAMED IN THESE YEARS**

## FOREWORD

*THE BUFFALO OR BISON WERE FOUND IN NORTH AMERICA IN THE 1600S.*

*AT ONE TIME THE AMERICAN BISON AND BUFFALO ROAMED THE FLATLANDS OF THE UNITED STATES FROM MEXICO TO CANADA. THEY WERE THE LIFELINE FOR THE NATIVE AMERICAN INDIANS. THEY PROVIDED FOOD AND CLOTHING FOR THEM. THEN CAME THE WHITEMAN AND KILLED FOR THE HIDES ONLY AND LET THE CARCUS ROT ON THE GROUND. ONCE THERE WERE 50 MILLION OF THEM BUT WERE KILLED ALMOST TO EXTINCTION. THEN RANCHERS IN TEXAS BEGAN TO SAVE AND BRING BACK THESE TRULY AMERICAN ANIMALS, THEY ARE AS MUCH A PART OF OUR HERITAGE AS THE COWBOY AND THE INDIANS.*

**THE RENFRO FAMILY HOME IN  
TENNESSEE**

## **THE YEAR WAS 1878**

***WE** WERE ALL IN OUR PLACES AROUND THE SUPPER TABLE FOR WHAT COULD BE THE LAST FAMILY MEAL FOR SOME TIME, BECAUST MY FRIEND **JOHN THOMAS** AND I HAD BOTH TOLD OUR FAMILIES THAT WE WERE GOING TO LEAVE THE NEXT MOURING AND GO TO **TEXAS** TO MAKE OUR FORTUNES.*

***DAD** HAD SAID GRACE AND PRAYED FOR US TO HAVE A SAFE AND GOOD JOURNEY, AND WE BEGAN TO EAT A MEAL THAT MOM HAD MADE OF ALL MY FAVORITE THINGS , WHEN DAD BEGAN TO SPEAK.*

***“ I KNOW THAT YOU BOYS HAVE BEEN TALKING ABOUT GOING TO TEXAS FOR SOME TIME, AS HAVE SOME OF OUR FRIENDS, “ HE SAID . “ YOU BOYS ARE BOTH***

***GROWN MEN NOW AND HAVE  
THE RIGHT TO MAKE YOUR  
OWN DECISIONS , WE WILL ALL  
MISS YOU AND WILL BE PRAYING  
FOR YOU . I HOPE YOU BOYS  
HAVE CONSIDERED ALL OF THE  
THINGS THAT COULD HAPPEN ON  
YOUR JOURNEY OF TWO MEN  
ALONE AND ON HORSEBACK. .“  
I KNOW DAD “, I ANSWERED,“WE  
HAVE TALKED TO MANY FRIENDS  
AND NEIGHBORS AS TO ALL THE  
THINGS WE MIGHT ENCOUNTER “.***

***THE SUPPER WAS GREAT , THERE SOON CAME  
A MOOD OF SORROW ABOUT MY LEAVING BUT I  
HUGGED EACH MEMBER, AND HURRIED TO  
BED FOR OUR TRIP WAS TO START AT THE  
MORNINGS FIRST LIGHT.***



***OUR*** PARENTS HAD GIVEN US EACH A  
HORSE FOR OUR TRIP, AND WE HAD ALSO  
BOUGHT A PACK HORSE WHICH WE WILL  
USE TO CARRY OUR SUPPLIES AND OTHER  
THINGS THAT WE WILL NEED.



***MY** OLD BLACK DOG MUST HAVE  
SENSED WHAT WAS ABOUT TO HAPPEN,  
BECAUSE HE KEPT CLOSE TO ME,  
ASKING TO GO WITH US, UNTIL I SAID,  
OK, YOU CAN COME ALONG, BESIDES  
YOU MAY HELP TO KEEP US SAFE. !*



# THE TRAVEL PLAN

***WE DO NOT KNOW HOW LONG THIS TRIP WILL TAKE US, NOR DO WE KNOW HOW MANY MILES WE WILL HAVE TO COVER, BUT OUR SPIRITS ARE HIGH AND WE ARE DETERMINED !***

**OUR** PLAN WAS TO LEAVE OUR HOMES IN MAURY COUNTY, TENNESSEE, HEAD WEST TOWARDS MEMPHIS WHICH IS ON THE WEST END OF THE STATE , WHERE WE COULD CROSS OVER THE MISSISSIPPI RIVER INTO THE STATE OF ARKANSAS. WE WOULD THEN TURN SOUTH AND FOLLOW THE RIVER TO A POINT WHERE WE WILL ENTER THE STATE OF LOUISIANA, AND CONTINUE TO FOLLOW THE RIVER SOUTH UNTIL WE HAVE REACHED A POINT ACROSS THE STATE WHERE WE WILL THEN TURN WEST, CONTINUE ACROSS THE STATE UNTIL WE ENTER THE STATE OF TEXAS.

**WE** WILL THEN CONTINUE WEST INTO TEXAS UNTIL WE FIND A PLACE WHERE WE WOULD LIKE TO SETTLE .

## **THE LEAVING**

***SPRING** HAS FINALLY ARRIVED AND IS AWAKENING ALL THE TREES AND PLANTS IN A CONCERT OF COLORS.. THE COLD AND WIND FILLED DAYS OF WINTER ARE NOW JUST A MEMORY .*

***THE** LARGE LOG HOUSE THAT WE ALL CALLED HOME , IN **MAURY** COUNTY , **TENNESSEE**, WILL SOON JUST BELONG IN MEMORY. I WILL MISS THE SMELL OF WOOD THAT CAME FROM THE LARGE FIREPLACE THAT COVERED EACH END OF THE HOUSE, AND SERVED AS OUR MEETING PLACE ON THOSE COLD NIGHTS OF WINTER . BUT I WILL NOT MISS THE ENDLISS GATHERING OF THE WOOD NECESSARY TO KEEP THEM GOING .*

*I HAD SPENT MOST OF MY GROWING UP, WORKING ON THE FAMILY FARM WITH MY FATHER AND SIBLINGS, FROM CLEARING THE LAND TO BE FARMED OF THE TREES AND ROCKS TO MAKE IT POSSIBLE TO GROW THE CORN , COTTON AND TOBACCO THAT WERE OUR CASH CROPS. THERE WAS ALSO THE TASK OF FARMING WITH OXEN. FARMING WITH OXEN REQUIRED 2 MEN, ONE TO GUIDE THE OXEN AND ONE TO GUIDE THE PLOW , WHILE WE USED OXEN, WE ALSO HAD SOME HORSES THAT WE USED FOR TRAVEL AND PULLING THE WAGON .*

*MY FATHER HAD BEEN ABLE TO PURCHASE HIS OWN LAND IN PART FROM THE GRANT THAT HE WAS GIVEN FOR SERVICE IN THE CIVIL WAR.*

**THE** SKY WAS JUST BEGINNING TO  
TURN TO A LIGHTER COLOR, TELLING ME THAT  
THE SUN WAS ABOUT TO COME UP AND I WAS  
READY. I HAD PUT THE SADDLE ON MY  
HORSE AND THE SUPPLIES ON THE  
PACKHORSE. AND WAS NOW WAITING FOR MY  
FRIEND **JOHN** TO ARRIVE SO WE COULD BEGIN  
OUR JOURNEY. . I AM **JOSEPH RENFRO** AND  
MY FRIENDS NAME IS **JOHN THOMAS..**  
**BOTH** OUR FAMILIES HAD COME FROM  
**SCOTLAND,** TO THE **AMERICAS** LOOKING FOR  
A BETTER LIFE AND A CHANCE FOR THEIR OWN  
LAND. THEY HAD COME FROM THE SEAPORT  
IN **LONDON ENGLAND,** AND FOLLOWED THE  
SAME SEA ROUTE AS HAD THE **MAYFLOWER,**  
AND LANDED AT **JAMESTOWN COLONY.** THEY  
THEN MIGRATED TO **MAURY CO., TENNESSE,**  
WHERE WE NOW LIVE AND ARE FARMERS .

*JOHN AND I HAVING GROWN UP CLEARING LAND FOR FARMING AND HAD BOTH BECOME TIRED OF COTTON, CORN AND TOBACCO AND HAVING COME OF AGE TO LIVE AS GROWN MEN AND HEARING THAT **TEXAS** WAS THE PLACE TO BE , HAVE OUR HORSES READY TO BEGIN OUR JOURNEY. WE HAD SAID OUR GOODBYES LAST NIGHT TO OUR FAMILIES AND ARE ON OUR WAY TO THE PROMISED LAND.*



## **GETING STARTED**

***I HAD GOTTEN UP EARLY AND SADDLED THE HORSES AND LOADED THE PACK HORSE WITH OUR SUPPLIES AND WAS WAITING FOR JOHN TO ARRIVE , AND HERE HE IS !***

***“GOOD MORNING JOHN,” I SAID ,  
“I AM READY TO GO, DID YOU  
BRING THE RIFLES THAT YOUR  
FATHER HAS GIVEN US ?***

***“YES” HE AWNSERED, “I HOPE  
WE DON'T HAVE TO USE THEM  
FOR ANYTHING BUT SHOOTING  
WHAT GAME WE MIGHT NEED  
FOR FOOD.”***

***“I KNOW WHAT YOU MEAN, “I WAS  
ALSO TOLD WE COULD CROSS  
INDIAN TERRITORY, AND THAT WE***

***SHOULD ALWAYS BE AWARE OF  
OUR SURROUNDINGS “. “INDIANS  
HAVENT BEEN SEEN IN TENNESSEE  
FOR SOME TIME NOW, WE SHOULD  
ALWAYS BE ON OUR GUARD”.***

***“SO, LET'S MOUNT UP AND GET  
STARTED”, I SAID.***

***WE THEN MOUNTED OUR HORSES AND  
BEGAN WESTWARD DOWN THE TRAIL TOWARDS  
MEMPHIS , WHERE WE COULD CROSS OVER  
THE MISSISSIPPI RIVER ON A FLAT BOTTOM  
STEAM BOAT INTO THE STATE OF ARKANSAS.***

***WHEN WE WERE ABOUT 2 HOURS INTO OUR  
JOURNEY, IT DAWNED ON ME THAT WE WOULD  
ALSO CROSS THE LARGE TENNESSEE RIVER  
FIRST AND WE HADN'T TALKED ABOUT IT.***



*I CALLED OUT TO JOHN,  
“ JOHN, RIDE UP BESIDE ME,  
WE NEED TO TALK “*

*“OK “ HE CALLED BACK,  
AS HE RODE UP FROM BEHIND  
THE PACK HORSE, “WHAT'S UP,”  
HE ASKED ?*

*“WE FORGOT TO TALK ABOUT  
HAVING TO CROSS THE  
TENNESSEE RIVER FIRST,  
AND IT IS NO SMALL CREEK.”  
I SAID .*

*I KNOW THAT WE DID NOT,  
BUT I DID TALK TO A*

***NEIGHBOR WHO HAS BEEN  
ACROSS IT, AND HE TOLD ME  
THAT THERE WOULD NOT  
BE A PROBLEM THERE, THAT  
DURING THE CIVIL WAR,  
BOTH ARMIES HAD PUT A  
CROSSING BARGE AT EACH  
PLACE WHERE A ROAD OR  
TRAIL MET THE RIVER.”  
HE ANSWERED, “ THESE  
BARGES ARE FLAT SO THEY  
CAN MOVE ANIMALS AS WELL  
AS PEOPLE. ANY SMALL  
CREEKS WE MIGHT COME TO  
WON'T BE A PROBLEM FOR  
THE HORSES TO CROSS.***

***“ I'M GLAD YOU THOUGHT***

***TO ASK ABOUT THAT, I  
COMPLETELY FORGOT IT “,  
I SAID.***

***WITH THAT WE CONTINUED OUR TRAVEL.  
JOHN MOVING BACK TO BEHIND THE PACK  
HORSE AND BLACK DOG KEEPING CLOSE  
BESIDE ME.***

***WE HAD ONLY TRAVELED ANOTHER TEN  
OR SO MILES , WHEN I NOTICED A MAN AND  
WOMAN APPROACHING US FROM A TRAIL THAT  
WOULD MEET OURS, JUST DOWN THE ROAD.  
WHEN THEY HAD REACHED THE POINT WHERE  
OUR TRAILS MET, THEY HAD STOPPED AND  
SEEMED TO BE WAITING FOR US TO REACH  
THEM.. WHEN WE GOT NEAR, THEY WAVED A***

*FRIENDLY GREETING, LETTING US KNOW THAT THEY WERE FRIENDS NOT FOES, AND THAT THEY WANTED TO TALK.*

***THEY** WERE A MAN AND WIFE WHO LIVED FARTHER NORTH IN THE STATE THAN WE HAD, AND WERE ON THEIR WAY TO VISIT SOME RELATIVES THAT LIVED SEVERAL MILES ON DOWN THE TRAIL THAT WE WERE TRAVILING.*

***IT** SEEMS THAT THEY WOULD LIKE TO TRAVEL ALONG CLOSE BEHIND US, FOR SAFETY .*

***I** AM SURE THAT THEY HAD NOTICED THE RIFLES THAT WE BOTH CARRIED IN OUR SADDLE HOLSTERS, BUT I ALSO THINK THAT THEY WOULD NOT BE TRAVELING WITHOUT WEAPONS.*

***THEY SEEMED LIKE A NICE AND HONEST COUPLE, AND SINCE BLACK DOG APPEARED TO LIKE THEM AND SINCE HE WAS MY DOG, I KNEW HE WAS A GOOD JUDGE OF CHARACTER, WE ALLOWED THEM TO TRAVEL ALONG WITH US UNTIL THEY REACHED THEIR TURN-OFF POINT.***

***AS JOHN AND I STARTED OUR JOURNEY WE HAD NO IDEA AS HOW MANY MILES WE MUST TRAVEL EACH DAY TO REACH OUR DESTINATION, SO WE BEGAN TO TALK ABOUT THIS!***

***“JOHN”, I SAID, “WE HAVE NO IDEA HOW FAST WE MUST GO TO REACH OUR GOAL IN A REASONABLE TIME AND STILL PROTECT OUR HORSES. I THINK THAT WE SHOULD RIDE AT A SLOW LOPE FOR ABOUT***

***FIFTEEN OR TWENTY MINUTES AND  
THEN SLOW DOWN TO A FAST WALK,  
AND AFTER ANOTHER TWENTY***

***MINUTES, TO A SLOW WALK  
FOR A WHILE AND THEN  
A REST PERIOD FOR BOTH US AND  
OUR HORSES , HOW DOES THAT  
SOUND TO YOU ?.***

***“SOUNDS GOOD TO ME” HE SAID,  
“WE CAN TRY DIFFERENT WAYS TO  
DO THIS UNTIL WE FIND OUT  
WHAT WORKS BEST FOR US “.  
“ WE COULD ALSO GET OFF AND  
WALK BESIDE THEM AND THIS  
COULD HELP BOTH OF US TO  
REST AND STILL TRAVEL WITHOUT  
STOPPING . WE CAN ALSO REST***

***WITH A NOON BREAK TO EAT  
AND LET THEM GRAZE “.***

***WE RODE ALONG, LAUGHING AND TALKING ABOUT WHAT COULD BE AHEAD FOR US AND JUST ENJOYING EACH OTHERS COMPANY. THE DAY WAS PERFECT, THE SUN WAS SHINING AND NOT TOO HOT. THE ROAD WAS DIRT AND IN SOME AREAS NOT MUCH MORE THAN A TRAIL, BUT HEADED TO WHERE WE WANTED TO BE.. THIS WAS THE ROUTE THAT MOST OF THE PEOPLE FROM OUR PART OF TENNESSEE WOULD USE ON THEIR WAY TO MEMPHIS.***

***WE HAD TO KEEP WATCH THAT THE TRAIL WE WERE TRAVELING WAS CLOSE TO THE GRASS THAT WE WOULD NEED FOR THE HORSES . THERE WERE AREAS THAT WERE STILL OPEN RANGE BECAUSE TENNESSEE WAS MOSTLY FARM LAND AND LOTS OF TREED***

*PLACES . WHICH WERE AWAKENING FOR THE NEW YEAR, WHICH REMINDED US OF HOME.*

***WE** HAD MADE IT THROUGH THE FIRST DAY AND HAD FOUND A GOOD SPOT FOR US TO SPEND OUR FIRST NIGHT ON THE TRAIL. IT HAD GRASS FOR THE HORSES AND WAS CLOSE TO TREES WHERE WE WOULD SPEND THE NIGHT SLEEPING ON THE GROUND. THIS REMINDED US OF THE TIMES WE WERE GROWING UP WHEN OUR PARENTS WOULD GIVE US SOME SUPPLIES AND WE WOULD SPEND THE NIGHT CAMPING OUT ALONE, PRETENDING WE WERE SOMEDAY GOING TO DO JUST THAT . **WE** UNLOADED OUR PACK HORSE AND PUT THE GEAR WHERE WE WOULD BE SLEEPING, UNSADDLED THE OTHER HORSES AND HOBbled THEM SO THAT THEY COULD GRAZE DURING THE NIGHT. **BECAUSE** OF ALL THE GRASS AROUND US, WE DECIDED*



*TO HAVE A MEAL OF DRIED MEAT CALLED JERKY..*

***ALTHOUGH** WE HAD A HARD FIRST DAY AND I WAS GLAD TO BE ABLE TO LAY DOWN AND REST, IT WAS HARD TO SLEEP. I HAD DREAMS OF INDIANS AND WILD CRITTERS COMING FOR ME, BUT I FINALLY FELL ASLEEP AND WAS GLAD TO WAKE UP THE NEXT MORNING .*

***OUR** BRAKFAST CONSISTED OF DRIED FRUIT, WHICH WE ATE ON OUR HORSES AS WE CONTINUED OUR JOURNEY. . I ASKED **JOHN**,  
“ **HOW MANY MILES DO YOU THINK WE MADE TODAY** “,  
“ **I DON'T REALLY KNOW, MAYBE 25 OR 30**” HE ANWSERED.  
“**I HOPE WE CAN MAKE MORE***

***TODAY, NOW THAT WE HAVE  
GOTTEN THE HANG OF IT “***

***“YOU KNOW”, I SAID, “ I HAVE  
BEEN LOOKING AT THE MAPS,  
AND WHEN WE GET TO  
MEMPHIS, INSTEAD OF CROSSING,  
OVER THE RIVER, WE COULD  
TAKE A RIVER BOAT DOWN TO  
NEW ORLEANS, WHICH WE HAVE  
NEVER SEEN, THIS WOULD  
SAVE US SEVERAL DAYS ON THE  
HORSES AND ALSO GIVE THEM A  
REST !, BUT THE BOAT RIDE  
WOULD USE UP A LOTS OF OUR  
VALUABLE MONEY, WHAT DO  
YOU THINK ?”***

***“WELL”, HE ANSWERED, “ I HAVE  
THOUGHT ABOUT THAT MYSELF,***

*BUT WE HAVE NEVER SEEN THIS PART OF THE COUNTRY EITHER “, YOU REMEMBER , “WE HAVE FIGURED THAT THE TRIP WOULD TAKE US ABOUT A MONTH AND A HALF, IF WE COULD TRAVEL AN AVERAGE OF 30 MILES A DAY.” “I AM SORT OF ENJOYING LIVING ON THE LAND”. “ IT WE CROSS OVER AND FOLLOW THE RIVER ROADS DOWN UNTIL WE TURN WEST TOWARDS TEXAS, WE WILL FIND MANY PLACES WHERE WE COULD GET ANY SUPPLIES THAT WE MIGHT NEED, AND IF WE RUN SHORT OF MONEY, THERE WOULD BE PLACES WE COULD STOP AND WORK A WHILE AND MAKE US SOME MORE MONEY”. “I WOULD LIKE TO SEE NEW ORLEANIS, BUT IF YOU*

***HAVE SEEN ONE TOWN, YOU HAVE SEEN THEM ALL !”***

***“GOOD POINT JOHN,” I SAID, “ WE WILL STICK TO OUR ORIGINAL PLAN “.***

***THERE*** WERE DAYS THAT WE FOUND VERY FEW WHO WERE GOING THE SAME WAY AS WE WERE, WHICH MADE OUR DAYS FEEL LONGER .

***THERE*** WERE TIMES WHEN WE MET PEOPLE WHO WERE GOING THE SAME AS US, AND WHO WANTED TO TRAVEL ALONG BEHIND US FOR SAFETY. WE ALSO FOUND PEOPLE WHO WERE COMING BACK FROM **MEMPHIS**. WE MET ONE FAMILY THAT TOLD US WE WERE ABOUT 2 DAYS AWAY FROM THE BIG RIVER.

**WE** ARRIVED IN **MEMPHIS** AND TRAVELED DOWN TO WHERE WE COULD TAKE A RIVER

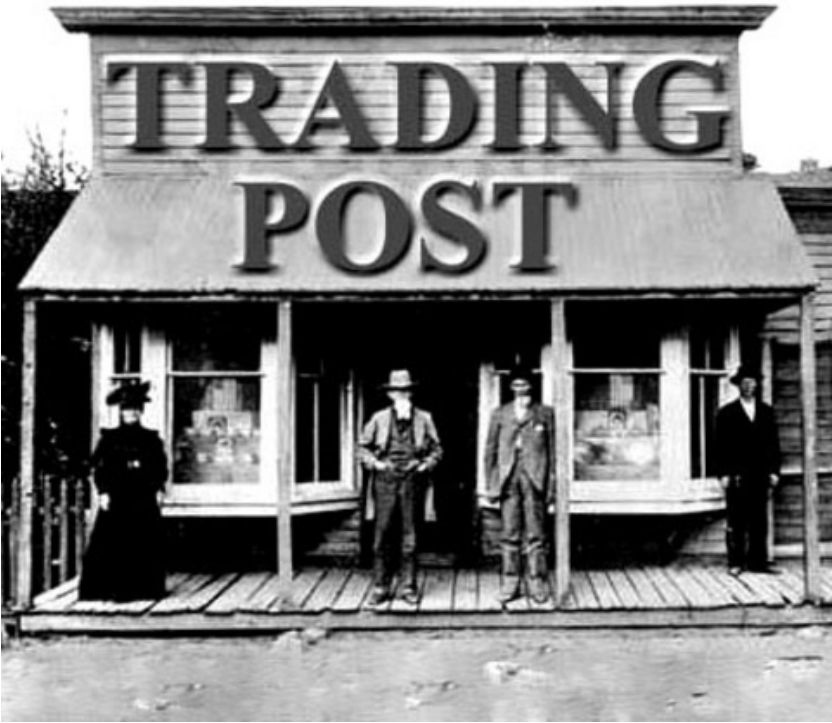
*BOAT ACROSS THE MISSISSIPPI RIVER. WE HAD ABOUT A 30 MINUTE WAIT BEFORE WE WERE ON OUR FIRST BOAT EVER. THE HORSES MADE THE TRIP JUST FINE BECAUSE THERE WERE MORE ANIMALS MAKING THE SAME TRIP.*

*WHILE WE HAD BEEN WAITING FOR THE BOAT RIDE, WE HAD OUR FIRST HOMEMADE MEAL IN A WEEK.*

*WE HAD CROSSED THE RIVER AND AGAIN MOUNTED OUR HORSES AND WERE BACK ON OUR JOURNEY SOUTH ALONG THE TRAIL. WE FOUND THAT THERE WERE PLENTY OF PLACES TO BUY MOST ANYTHING WE MIGHT NEED ON THE TRAIL ALONG THE RIVER .*



**THE CROSSOVER POINT  
OF THE MISSISSIPPI RIVER  
AT MEMPHIS , TENNESSEE**



***THESE** WERE THE TYPE OF PLACES ALONG THE RIVER ROAD WHERE WE WOULD BE BUYING ANY SUPPLIES THAT WE MAY RUN SHORT OF. WE WERE TOLD THAT THERE WERE MANY OF THESE STORES WHERE THE LOCALS ALSO SHOPPED .*

**AS** WE BEGAN THIS PART OF OUR TRIP, WE FOUND OURSELVES MEETING AND TALKING WITH THOSE WHO WE HAD MET.

**WE** BEGAN TO HAVE A VACATION INSTEAD OF THIS LONG AND HARD RIDE.

**WE** BEGAN TO ENJOY OUR TRAVELS.

**SOON** WE HAD TRAVELED ACROSS THE STATE OF **ARKANSAS**, AND THE STATE OF **LOUISIANA**

AND WOULD THEN TRAVEL A WAY DOWN INTO THE STATE UNTIL WE HAD REACHED THE POINT WHERE WE TURNED WEST AND WOULD GO ACROSS UNTIL WE REACHED **TEXAS**.

**SHORTLY** AFTER WE ENTERED THE STATE OF **LOUISIANA** ,WE CAME TO A TRADING POST WHERE WE DECIDED TO STOP. THIS POST



*WAS LARGER THAN THE OTHERS WE HAD SEEN,  
AND WOULD OFFER US MORE THINGS TO PICK  
FROM . WE RODE UP TO THE HITCHING POST,  
TIED OUR HORSES AND STARTED TO WALK TO  
THE DOOR WHEN I NOTICED THAT **BLACK DOG**  
WAS FOLLOWING CLOSE BEHIND . I THEN  
STOPPED AND TURNED TO HIM,*

***“ SORRY BLACK DOG, BUT YOU  
WILL HAVE TO STAY OUTSIDE  
AND GUARD OUR HORSES “  
I SAID.***

*WITH THIS HE DROPPED HIS HEAD AND  
TURNED AROUND AND WENT BACK TO THE  
HORSES WHERE HE SAT DOWN CLOSE BY  
THEM .*

*I CALLED BACK TO HIM AND SAID,*

***“ DON'T WORRY, I WILL BRING  
YOU BACK A SURPRISE “, HE  
THEN RAISED HIS HEAD AND  
LOOKED WITH WHAT SEEMED  
TO BE A DOG SMILE..***

***I THEN TURNED TO JOHN AND SAID,***

***“ YOU KNOW, I THINK THAT  
DOG SPEAKS ENGLISH”***

***“ I THINK HE DOES,” I KNOW  
THAT I CAN TELL HIS BARK  
FROM OTHER DOGS .. JOHN  
ANSWERED .***

***AS WE ENTERED THE POST , WE COULD SEE  
THAT IT WAS THE LARGEST AND BEST STOCKED  
THAT WE HAD SEEN .***

***WE SAW THAT IT ALSO HAD A PLACE TO EAT,  
SO NOT EVER HAVING HAD ANY CAJUN FOOD***

*WE SAT DOWN AND HAD A GREAT MEAL.  
ONCE WE HAD FINISHED EATING, WE FINISHED  
SELECTING OUR SUPPLIES AND WERE HEADED  
FOR THE DOOR, I REMEMBERED WHAT I HAD  
PROMISED **BLACK DOG** , THEN I SPOTTED THE  
CANDY DISPLAY WHERE I PICKED A LARGE  
PACKAGE OF HOREHOUND STICKS . IT WAS  
THEN I NOTICED A LARGE MAP ON THE STORE  
WALL SHOWING WHERE WE WERE. THE  
OWNER THEN CAME OVER AND LOOKED AT  
OUR MAP AND TOLD US ABOUT HOW MANY  
MILES WE WOULD NEED TO GO BEFORE WE  
SHOULD TURN WEST TOWARDS **TEXAS**. WE  
THANKED HIM AND LEFT TO RESUME OUR TRIP.  
WHEN WE WALKED OUT THE DOOR, **BLACK  
DOG'S** HEAD POPPED UP AND SHOWED A  
SLOBBERING MOUTH, READY TO DEVOUR HIS  
TREAT . IT JUST HAPPENED THAT HIS  
FAVORITE CANDY WAS ALSO MINE. WE GAVE  
**BLACK DOG** A FEW MINUTES TO ENJOY HIS*

*WELL EARNED TREAT, THEN WE MOUNTED UP  
AND GOT BACK TO OUR JOURNEY.*



***WE** WERE NOW INSIDE **TEXAS** , MOVING WEST  
WHEN WE CAME TO THE PLATEAU OF THE  
LAND OF THE **TAWAKONI INDIANS**. AS WE*



*MOVED DOWN THE NORTHERN SIDE OF THE HILL, WE CAME TO THE SPRING FED LAKE THAT WE HAD HEARD ABOUT AND TOLD TO BE SURE TO FIND .*



**THE** WATER FLOWED OUT INTO A SMALL LAKE THAT HAD BEEN THE SOURCE OF WATER FOR THE TRIBE OF INDIANS FOR YEARS. WE HAD NOT SEEN ANY INDIANS AROUND AND REMEMBERED THAT WE HAD HEARD THAT THE INDIANS HAD BEEN A FRIENDLY TRIBE WHO HAD LIVED ON TOP OF THE PLATEAU AND HAD FARMED THE LAND WITH CORN AND VEGETABLES . WE HAD ALSO HEARD THAT THIS TRIBE HAD NOT BEEN FOUND ANYWHERE BUT IN **TEXAS**, BUT THEY HAD SUDDENLY DISAPPEARED WITHOUT A TRACE. WE WERE TOLD THAT ARROW HEADS AND OTHER OF THEIR THINGS COULD STILL BE FOUND.

**WE** GOT OFF OF THE HORSES AND UNSADDLED THEM FOR A REST NEAR THE COOL FRESH WATER THAT WE EACH WERE ENJOYING. WE HAD SPENT SEVERAL HOURS

*THERE IN A MUCH NEEDED REST, UNTIL IT WAS TIME THAT WE GOT BACK TO OUR MISSION , WHEN JOHN SAID,*

***”JOSEPH, WHY DONT WE SPEND THE NIGHT HERE ?, I KNOW THAT WE MAY BE CLOSE TO THE END OF OUR JOURNEY AND WE ARE BOTH LOOKING FORWARD TO THAT, BUT IF WE STAYED THE NIGHT HERE AND RESTED,WE COULD ARRIVE IN BETTER CONDITION THAN WE ARE NOW, AND MAYBE GET MORE DONE.***

***“HEY JOHN,”, I SAID, “THAT SOUNDS LIKE A GREAT IDEA TO ME , THERE SEEMS TO BE A GOOD SPOT OVER THERE NEAR THAT GROVE OF TREES, WHERE WE COULD START A FIRE AND MAKE A MEAL AS WELL AND HAVE A SPOT***



***TO PUT OUR BLANKETS FOR THE NIGHT. WE COULD ALSO KEEP A SMALL FIRE GOING ALL NIGHT TO KEEP US WARM AND MAYBE DRIVE AWAY ANY SMALL ANIMALS THAT MIGHT ALSO USE THE SPRING THEMSELVES.”***

***WITH*** THAT WE MOVED OUR ANIMALS OVER TO THE GROUP OF TREES, WHERE WE BEGAN TO REMOVE OUR HORSES SADDLES AND TO HOBBLE THEM FOR THE NIGHT, SO THAT THEY COULD GRAZE. ***WE KNOW THAT BLACK DOG WILL KEEP WATCH.***

***SOON*** WE HAD A SMALL FIRE GOING, AND BEGAN TO SEARCH THROUGH OUR SUPPLY BAGS FOR SOMETHING TO MAKE A MEAL. ***WE FINALLY SETTLED ON SOME BACON AND BEANS , AND SOME APPLES THAT WE HAD***

*BOUGHT AT OUR LAST STOP AT A TRADING POST.*

*I TALKED JOHN INTO LETTING ME COOK THE APPLES WHILE HE COOKED THE BACON AND BEANS, WHILE HE WAS PREPARING THOSE THINGS, I BEGAN TO CUT UP THE APPLES, WHICH I PLACED IN A SKILLET AND SPREAD THEM WITH PLENTY OF SUGAR. I PUT THE SKILLET NEAR THE EDGE OF THE FIRE WHERE THEY WOULD COOK UNTIL ALL THE SUGAR MELTED DOWN AND FILLED ALL OF THEM WITH THAT SWEET TASTE MIXED WITH THE APPLE JUICE.*

***COUNTRY** PEOPLE MIGHT NOT KNOW MUCH, BUT THEY KNOW HOW TO EAT !!!*

***WE** FINISHED EATING , CLEANED UP THE DISHES AND WERE PICKING OUT A GOOD*

*PLACE TO LAY OUR SLEEPING BAGS, WHEN  
JOHN SPOKE -----*

***“YOU KNOW JOSEPH, THIS TRIP  
WITYHA FRIEND AS YOU, MAY  
WELL TURN OUT TO BE THE  
BEST THING THAT MAY EVER  
HAPPEN TO ME IN MY ENTIRE  
LIFE !, AND I WILL ALWAYS  
REMEMBER EACH AND EVERY  
THING THAT HAS HAPPEND.***

***“I KNOW JOHN, I FEEL THE  
SAME WAY, YOU HAVE BEEN  
A GREAT FRIEND AND I HOPE  
WE CAN SETTLE CLOSE TOGETHER “.***

***WE GAVE EACH OTHER A BIG HUG AND THEN***

*WE FOUND THE WAY TO OUR BLANKETS FOR SLEEP BEFORE TWO GROWN MEN MIGHT HAVE THEMSELVES TEARY EYED .*

***WE** AWAKENED EARLY THE NEXT MORNING, PACKED OUR GEAR, SADDLED OUR HORSES AND MOUNTED UP AND HEADED STILL WESTERLY AROUND THE NORTH END OF THE PLATEAU OF THE **TAWAKONI** INDIANS.*

*.“**JOHN,**”, I SAID, “**DID YOU HEAR BLACK DOG GROWLING DURING THE EARLY MORNING LIKE I DID?**”, “**NO**”, HE SAID*

***THEN** AS WE ROUNDED TO THE LOWLANDS AND WERE HEADED FOR THE WEST TOWARDS THE RICH AND FERTILE BLACK LANDS, WE SUDDENLY CAME UPON BUFFALO GRAZING THERE. THEY MUST HAVE COME UP DURING THE NIGHT.*



## **THE BUFFALO**

***THIS** WAS THE FIRST TIME THAT WE HAD EVER SEEN BUFFALO AND WERE AMAZED AT WHAT WE SAW. THEY WERE MAGNIFICENT ANIMALS BUT STRANGE LOOKING AS IF THEY WERE FROM ANOTHER WORLD. THEY REMINDED US OF A HERD OF CATTLE GRAZING SLOW AND PEACEFUL,*

***WE** REMEMERED NOT TO GET TOO CLOSE UNLESS YOU WOULD STAMPEDE THEM, AND TO BE ON LOOKOUT FOR THE MALES WHO WOULD BE WATCHING THE HERD FOR POSSIBLE DANGER. THESE COULD BE BAD FOR ONE'S HEALTH. NOT ONLY WILL THEY PROTECT THE FEMALES BUT THEY COULD RUN FAST ENOUGH THAT YOU DID NOT WANT TO MAKE THEM MAD.*





***“JOHN “, I SAID, “ I THINK WE SHOULD MAKE A WIDE BERTH AROUND THIS HERD”, I SEE SOME OF THE COWS HAVE SMALL CALVES AND WILL BE WATCHING FOR DANGER. I THINK THAT THEY WOULD NOT TAKE KINDLY TO US. HAVING BLACK DOG WITH US, IN FACT, I THINK IT WOULD BE A GOOD IDEA IF I PUT HIM UP ON THE SADDLE WITH ME IN CASE WE HAVE TO MAKE A FAST GET-AWAY.”. GOOD IDEA “,HE ANSWERED.***

***WE HAD BROKEN CAMP JUST IN TIME THIS MORNING, BECAUSE THESE BUFFALO WOULD HEAD FOR THE SPRING TO DRINK LATER.***



***WE SAT AND WATCHED THEM FOR SOME TIME.  
WE KEPT OUR DISTANCE FROM THE HEARD  
AND MUST HAVE SAT THERE FOR AN HOUR  
JUST ADMIRING THESE STRANGE CREATURES  
THAT WE MAY NEVER SEE AGAIN .***



***BRETTON  
DAWSON  
OF TEXAS***

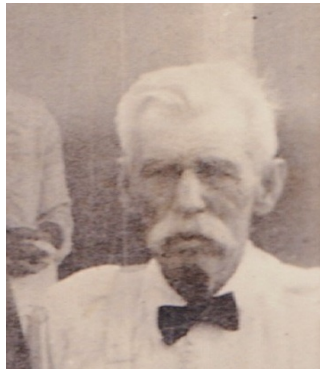


***WE CONTINUED WEST TOWARDS NORTH TEXAS WHERE THERE WAS A MAN NAMED DAWSON WHO WAS PUTTING TOGETHER A LARGE CATTLE RANCH OF SEVERAL THOUSAND ACRES, AND THAT HE MIGHT PROVIDE US WITH JOBS AND A PLACE TO EARN SOME MONEY IF WE WERE STILL ABOUT FINDING A PLACE OF OUR OWN.***

***WE FINALLY FOUND OUR WAY TO BRITT DAWSON, AND HE INFORMED US THAT HE DID IN FACT, NEED SOME RANCH HANDS, AND WOULD BE HAPPY TO HIRE US ON . WE BOTH SPENT THE NEXT COUPLE OF NIGHTS THERE . JOHN THOUGHT THAT HE WOULD LIKE TO WORK AS A COWBOY, BUT I STILL HAD MY MIND SET ON FINDING MY OWN PLACE AND HAVING A FAMILY, SO I MOVED ON.***



**JOSEPH AND HIS FAMILY AT HOME**  
**THIS PICTURE IS ABOUT 125 YEARS OLD.**



**JOSEPH RENFRO**

***JOSEPH FOUND HIS LAND JUST WEST OF WHAT IS NOW THE HISTORICAL TOWN OF DAWSON, NAVARRO COUNTY, TEXAS, WHERE HE SPENT HIS LIFE FARMING .***

***HE MARRIED MARY FRANCIS PUTMAN, AND FROM THIS UNION CAME FIVE SONS AND FOUR DAUGHTERS..***

***JOSEPH DIED AT HIS HOME IN DAWSON, TEXAS AT THE AGE OF 63.***

***JOSEPH SHELBORN RENFRO***

***1858 – 1921***

***HE WAS MY GRANDFATHER,  
MY AGE IS 93 .***



DECEMBER 7, 2023