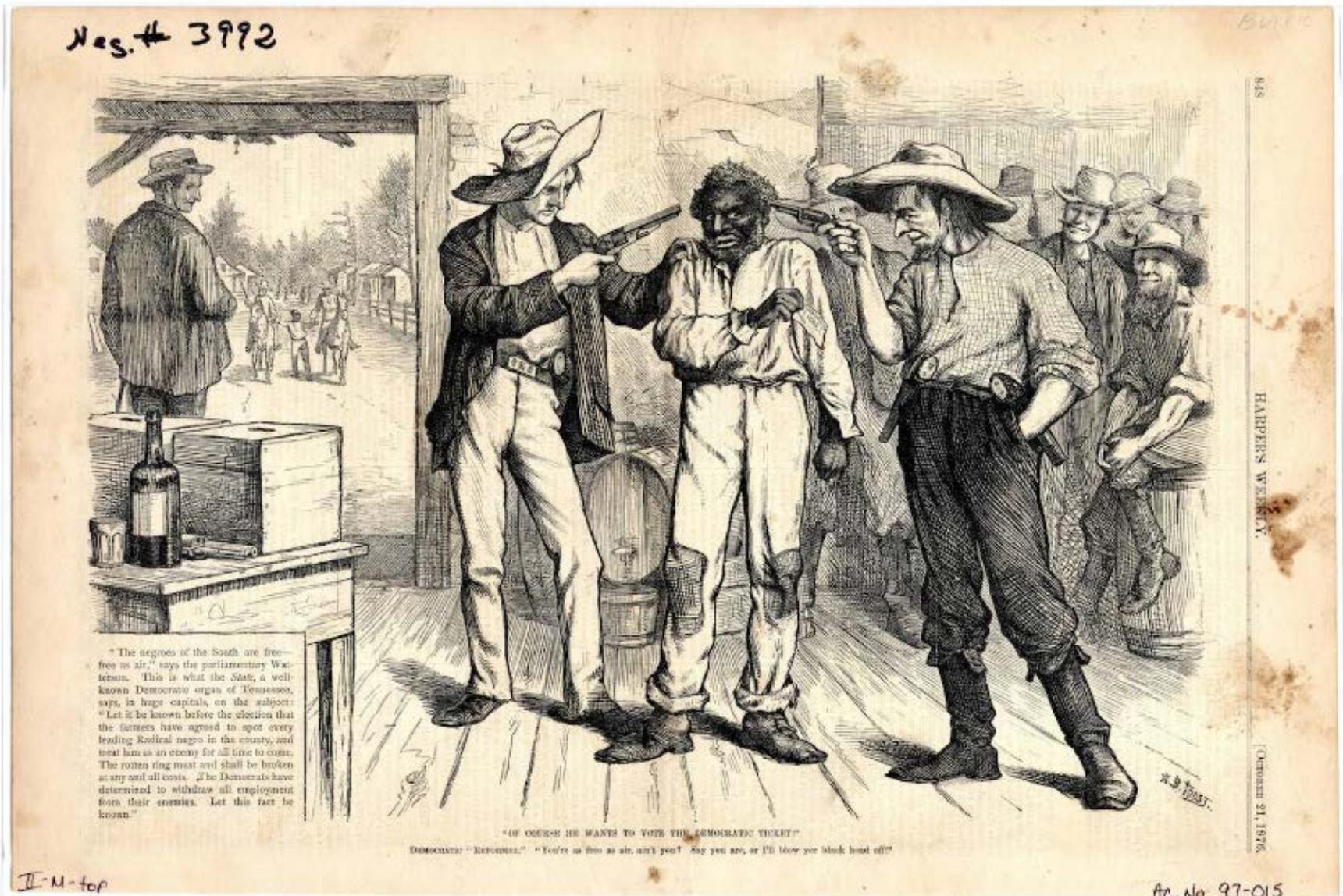


SOURCE A



An illustration from *Harper's Weekly* depicting white men subjecting a black man to violent intimidation while voting, 1876.

Source B

An 1875 newspaper article inviting Tennessee's African American residents to participate in a state convention about migration to Kansas.

THE KANSAS IMPOSITION.

A Convention of the Colored Race Called to Look Into the Matter.

If they must Emigrate they want to do it with their Eyes Open.

We have been requested to publish the following:

NASHVILLE, April 24.

To the colored people of Tennessee:

We, the undersigned citizens of Middle Tennessee, owing to the present demoralized and unsettled condition of the colored people of Tennessee, do hereby call the attention of every thinking colored man to the convention of the colored people of the State of Tennessee, to be held at the city of Nashville on the 19th day of May next, for the purpose of looking after the interests of the colored people. Seeing that there is so much imposition practiced upon the people, day by day, in regard to emigrating, by some unknown persons, that has caused a great deal of excitement among the colored people, and a great many have sold out and left their homes with the purpose of going to Kansas free.

Let every county send a full delegation to the convention on the 19th of May, and if it is the will of the people to emigrate, let us do it in an intelligent manner. Let every county hold their county conventions, and send their delegates to the State Convention. Let every district and ward hold their primary meetings, at their usual places, on the 12th of May, and send delegates to the county convention to be held on the 15th of May to elect delegates to the State Convention.

Let every man who feels an interest in the welfare of his race respond to this call.

Arrangements have been made with the Louisville and Nashville and Great Southern Railroad for all delegates to get excursion tickets for the round trip.

Delegates can get tickets at all stations on that line. We hope that all other railroads will let the delegates have excursion tickets.

The Memphis and Knoxville papers will please copy.

W. A. Sizemore, A. W. McConel, J. B. Williams, A. McClare, Benj. Singleton, Muston Molloy, Benj. Petway, W. H. Anthony, Wm. Butler, Thomas Brown, A. Johnson, J. W. Drane.

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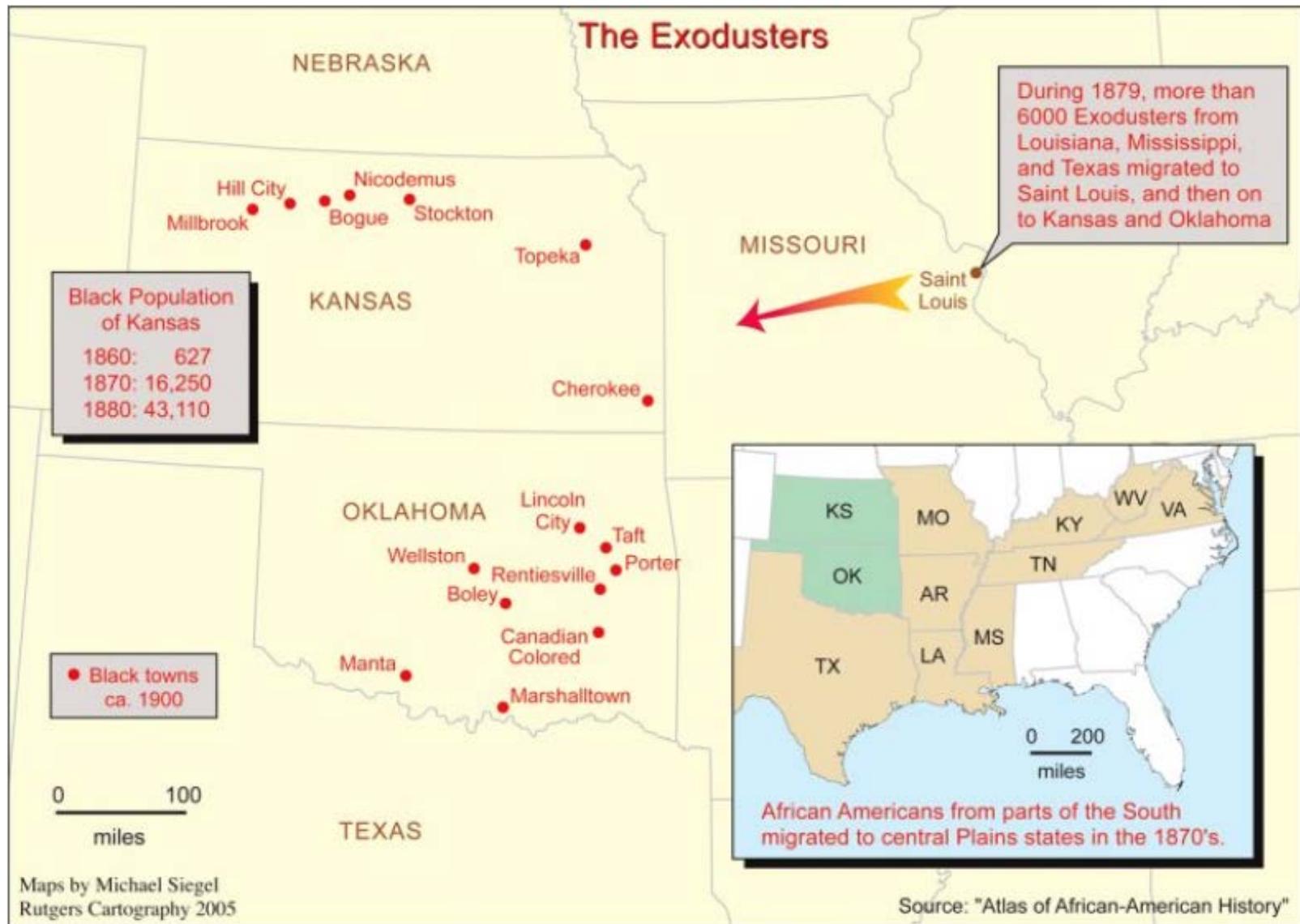
Source C

A Photograph of Benjamin “Pap” Singleton, 1880.



A native of Tennessee, Benjamin “Pap” Singleton was born enslaved in 1809 and became one of the leading promoters of black migration to Kansas in the 1870s. Singleton organized black settlements in Cherokee and Morris Counties in Kansas.

SOURCE E



A map showing black towns and settlements in Kansas and Oklahoma in 1900.

A broadside distributed by Benjamin Singleton advertising migration to Kansas, 1878.

HISTORICAL SOCIETY.

Ho for Kansas!

Brethren, Friends, & Fellow Citizens:
I feel thankful to inform you that the
REAL ESTATE
AND
Homestead Association,
Will Leave Here the
15th of April, 1878,
In pursuit of Homes in the Southwestern
Lands of America, at Transportation
Rates, cheaper than ever
was known before.
For full information inquire of
Benj. Singleton, better known as old Pap,
NO. 5 NORTH FRONT STREET.
Beware of Speculators and Adventurers, as it is a dangerous thing
to fall in their hands.
Nashville, Tenn., March 18, 1878.

Benjamin Singleton established the Edgefield Real Estate and Homestead Association to help organize travel and settlement for African Americans departing Tennessee for Kansas.



A print from Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper depicting African Americans en route to Kansas via St. Louis, 1879.



An illustration from Harper's Weekly entitled, "The Negro Exodus: The Old Style and the New," May 1, 1880.

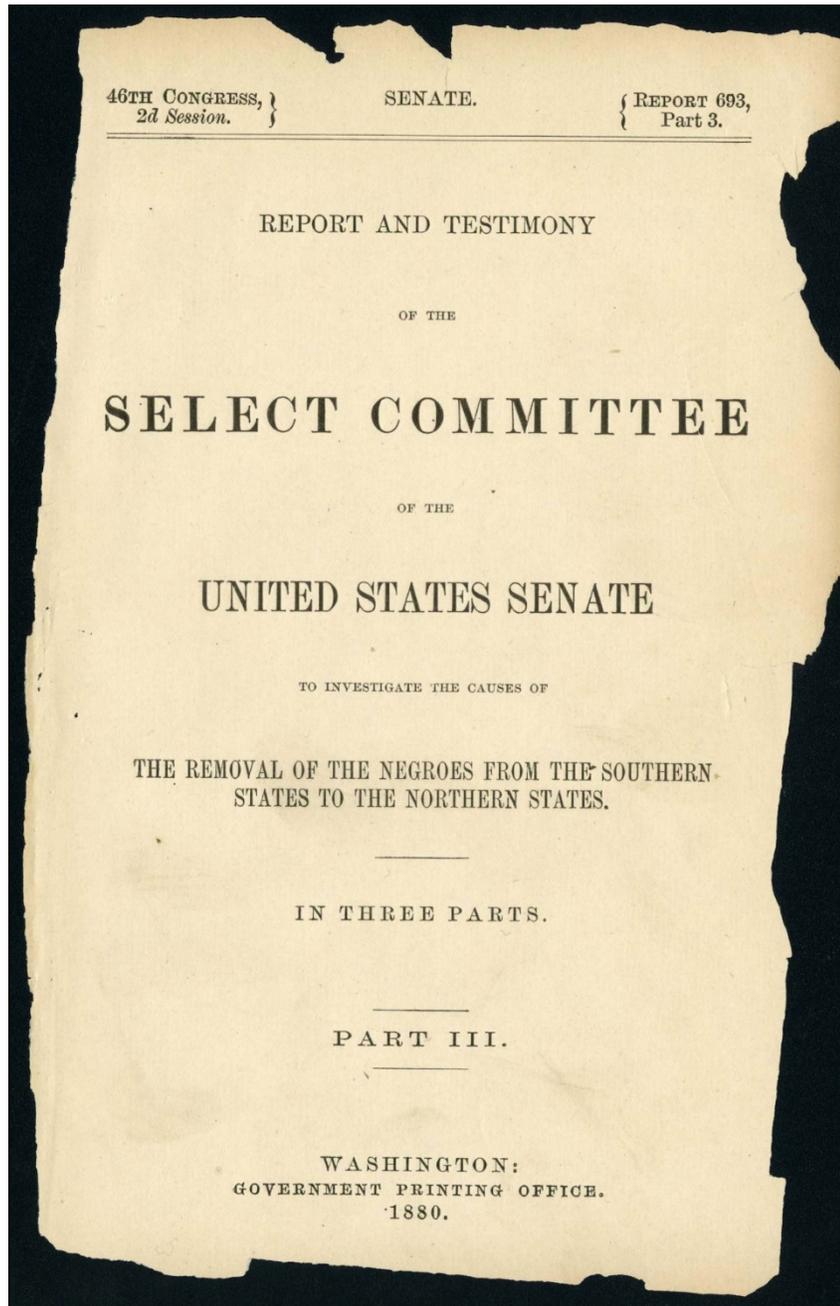
SOURCE H

A 1910 photograph of Elsie and Lela Scott, children of Exodusters John and Julia Scott, who settled in Stafford County, Kansas.



Twins Elsie (1889-1981) and Lela (1889-1962) Scott were two of seventeen children of Exodusters John and Julia Scott. The Scotts migrated from Louisiana to Indiana and then to Stafford County, Kansas. This photograph was taken at the W. R. Gray Studio in St. John, Kansas in 1910.

An excerpt from Benjamin Singleton's testimony before Congress, 1880.



After the sudden wave of African American migration from the South to Kansas in 1879, the US Senate appointed a committee of five senators to investigate the cause of the migration. The committee interviewed over 150 people, including Benjamin Singleton, who describes his role in the Exoduster Movement and his reasoning for promoting migration away from the South in this excerpt from his testimony.

carried to Dick Somers' shop in Cherry street, Nashville. But I have a thousand hearsays, that I don't care to talk about—not much.

Q. Well, have any of your people got employment that came in large crowds from Tennessee, Mississippi, and Louisiana?—A. The greater part of them have.

Q. Are they disposed to work?—A. Yes, sir. Let me tell you something about that, and you will agree with me. Now listen; these people that comes from these large farms have been used to—and I am sorry for that habit—living where there was a hundred or two hundred of them, where they can sing and go on, you know, and amuse themselves after the day's labor. Now when a gentleman comes in Kansas and says "I want a good man or woman,"—I have heard them testify that they came in and told these miraculous tales, when it was not so—they went out there and got lonesome. They are just like a hog that is used to a drove, take him out and he is a crazy hog; and they became just lonely, that is all; the people treated them well, and they got good prices, and they slept in the same house and the same room that these white people slept in, but they got lonely and wanted to be where their own people were, and I know that to be the facts; but they came rushing in very fast. Now I see where some of them said from eighty to a hundred thousand was coming. I am the very man that predicted that. It was me published it. I thought in eighteen months there would be from eighty thousand to one hundred thousand leaving the South. It was me done it; I published it; they say other folks did it. No, Governor St. John or other folks, they did not do it, it was me; *I* did it.

Q. Well, what do you think of it now?—A. I think it will come; it is sure to come.

Q. Is there any way to stop it?—A. No way, sir, on God's earth to stop it.

Q. Suppose the white people where they come from were to treat them well, give them their rights as American citizens, and give them what they earn, would not that stop the exodus?—A. Allow me to say to you that confidence is perished and faded away; they have been lied to every year. Every year when they have been going to work the crops, they have said, "I will do what is right to you," and just as soon as that man sees everything blooming and flourishing in the flowers and cotton blooms, he will look at that negro who has been his slave, and when he sees him walk up to take his half of the crop it is too much for him to stand, and he just denies his word, he denies his contract; and we will leave that country, and they will leave, till these people actually refrains from this way of treatment, and gives the negro the right hand of fellowship and acknowledges their wrongs, and then we have got no wrongs to acknowledge. My plan is for them to leave the country, and learn the South a lesson; and the whole of America—this Union—will have a lesson when cotton is from forty to fifty cents a pound, and you can't get it at that.

We don't want to leave the South, and just as soon as we have confidence in the South I am going to be an instrument in the hands of God to persuade every man to go back, because that is the best country; that is genial to our nature; we love that country, and it is the best country in the world for us; but we are going to learn the South a lesson. I have talked about this, and called a convention, and tried to harmonize things and promote the spirit of conciliation, and to do everything that could be done in the name of God. Why, I have prayed to the Almighty when it appeared to me an imposition before heaven to pray for them. I have taken my people out in the roads and in the

dark places, and looked up to the stars of heaven and prayed for the Southern man to turn his heart.

Q. You believe, then, there is no way to stop the exodus except by stopping the abuse of these people, and by treating them fairly, and that it will take some time to get their confidence, even then?—A. They will then go back. I have heard some say they will never go back; but they will go back.

Q. Has there been anything political in this move of yours?—A. I never had any political men in it, white or black.

Q. Have leading men in Kansas had any talk with you about your movement as a political one?—A. No, sir; this thing was got up by an ignorant class of men, and I will prove it to you. I am the leader of it, and have been at for thirteen years, and I am the smartest man in it, and I am only an ignorant man.

Q. What is your age?—A. Seventy years past.

Q. Do you know anything that Governor St. John has done to encourage your people to leave their homes in the Southern country?—A. I have talked with him on the subject; his view is like mine about it.

Q. Has he sent any circulars out, as you have done, encouraging them to come?—A. No, sir; I have heard false tales told on him.

Q. In what respect?—A. Why, that he persuaded people to come there without money or price. Not so. He welcomed them all in there, but his advice was to bring something to sustain them. I wish you could read this, and see my sentiment about that (referring to one of the earlier circulars sent out by witness). I have never asked a man to come without money; I have told him not to come without money, but to stay there; and I am the man that has done this, and I can prove it that I have never asked one of them to go to Kansas if he was without money, but I have told him to stay there.

Q. Well, can you tell us anything more on this subject of the exodus?—A. Why, my dear friends, I am full now.

Q. Well, if you can think of anything more that will give us any light on it, do so.—A. I think you have got all you want. I will tell you, now, that I do not want to hurt anybody; I love the South, and I want every one of my people to come out, to teach the South a lesson, that she may know if she thinks more of bulldozing than she does of the colored man's muscle; the colored man's muscle is her interest; and these dare devils that ride around in the night and abuse the people, when the country ought to be harmonized, then I say to them go, and whenever they change from that, then I want them to go back.

Mr. WINDOM. You consider yourself the father of the exodus, then, Mr. Singleton?

The WITNESS. Yes, sir; I am the father of it!

The CHAIRMAN. You are called "Pap Singleton," I believe?

The WITNESS. I am sir; I love everybody!

The CHAIRMAN. They call you "Pap" Singleton, because you are father of the exodus, is that it?

The WITNESS. I reckon they honor me with that name for my old age, sir.

By the CHAIRMAN:

Q. Whereabouts is this colony of yours in Kansas?—A. It is sixty miles rather southwest of Topeka.

Q. And you say there are a thousand acres in your colony?—A. Not that; that is in the Cherokee County. There was one hundred and sixty thousand acres, I think, of the old Indian reservation—Indian lands;

SOURCE J

"When we got in sight of Nicodemus the men shouted, "There is Nicodemus!" ... My husband pointed out various smokes coming out of the ground and said, "That is Nicodemus." The families lived in dugouts.... The scenery was not at all inviting, and I began to cry."

— Williana Hickman, in the Spring of 1878

Source: <https://www.legendsofamerica.com/ks-nicodemus/2/>

So I told my wife, and she says: 'Let us take to the woods in the night time.' Well we took [to] the woods, my wife and four children, and we was three weeks living in the woods waiting for a boat. Then a great many more black people came and we was all together at the landing. Boats came along, but they would not stop, but before long the Grand Tower hove up and we got on board.

Says the captain, 'Where's you going?' Says I, 'Kansas.' Says he, 'You can't go on this boat.' Says I, 'I do; you know who I am. I am a man who was a United States soldier and I know my rights, and if I and my family gets put off, I will go in the United States Court and sue for damages.' Says the Captain to another boat officer, 'Better take that nigger or he will make trouble.'

When I landed on the soil, I looked on the ground and I says this is free ground. Then I looked on the heavens, and I says them is free and beautiful heavens. Then I looked within my heart, and I says to myself I wonder why I never was free before? When I knew I had all my family in a free land, I said let us hold a little prayer meeting; so we held a little meeting on the river bank. It was raining but the drops fell from heaven on a free family, and the meeting was just as good as sunshine. We was thankful to God for ourselves and we prayed for those who could not come. I asked my wife did she know the ground she stands on. She said, 'No!' I said it is free ground; and she cried like a child for joy.

- John Solomon Lewis of Leavenworth, Kansas

John wrote this letter on June 10, 1879. Lewis and his family were among thousands of African Americans known as "Exodusters" who escaped the harsh economic and racial realities of the Reconstruction South. The journey was difficult and many suffered hardships.

Source: <https://herb.ashp.cuny.edu/items/show/967>