

1979

Mr. John Jeffries, Pres.,
Geary County Historical Society,
Junction City Kansas

Dear Mr. Jeffries,

The story of the Indian statue by Jeff Loeb, published in the Daily Union for December 17th, brought to my mind some facts about the Henderson family that you might like to have in your file. Since Mr. Loeb may plan to make further use of his material I will send him a carbon of this letter.

When my mother arrived from North Carolina to join my father in Kansas, several years before I was born, she and the five children with her, lived for a while in a small stone house at the Henderson place. Mother had been through some rugged conditions but they had deepened her faith in Infinite and strengthened her sympathy for others. Not so Capt. Henderson. Hurt and bitter, he felt that God was punishing him for something he had not done. His over-burdened heart found some relief in describing ^{to her} the blows fate had dealt him. She later passed along the stories to me.

There was an older son than Robert. I can't recall his name. He definitely disliked farming. Capt. Henderson got him an appointment to West Point. The boy disliked math ^{also}. He flunked it and was dismissed. Unwilling to return to the farm, or to face his father, he drifted to New Orleans. So far as I know that was the last his family knew of him. Miss Lizzie, a lively, athletic girl, was severely injured while skating. She remained slightly lame all her life. Her sister who was happily married to a successful traveling salesman, named Ritter, lost her hearing. (Their daughter, Helen, is the little girl holding the rope in my brother's photo of the unveiling of the Quivira monument.)

The final blow to Capt. Henderson involved Robert, who was not any more a farmer than his brother, except that he liked fine horses. He was driving in a light two-wheeled cart, similar to a sulky, when the horse shied, then lunged, throwing Robert under the wheel of the cart, then stepped back setting an iron-shod hoof on the boy's face, crushing the eyesocket so terribly that it could not be repaired sufficiently to accommodate a glass eye. Eye patches were not marks of distinction in those days. In Robert's mind he was disfigured as well as blinded for life, punished, as he had heard