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Early KCK History: Great Love Story Recounted



Quindaro Brown [Guthrie] Indian Princess
Courtesy Kansas City Kansan

Transcriptions are presented without changes except to improve readability.

It is Wyandotte county's greatest love story.

It is Kansas City, Kansas' version of Romeo and Juliet, or Heloise and Abelard; though with Valentine's day near, it appropriately has a happy ending.

The Abelard in this instance is Abelard Guthrie, who in 1844 in the cabin of George Clark at 3rd and Armstrong married Quindaro Brown in the first recorded wedding in Kansas.

The story actually started in London about 1760, when a Jewish youth named Samuel Sanders was arrested and falsely charged with stealing coins. He was convicted and sold into slavery in the United States colonies.

Sanders escaped to North Carolina, met Daniel Boone and went with him to Kentucky, where he was captured by Shawnee Indians. He was adopted by the tribe and wed an Indian girl. Their daughter married an Indian captive named Adam Brown.

Adam Brown was captured by the Wyandot Indians as a child in Virginia. After marrying the Shawnee girl, he went on to become a chief of the Wyandot tribe.

Their granddaughter was Quindaro Brown. Historians disagree on the meaning of the first name. Some have written it means, "Daughter of the Sun," while a noted Kansas City, Kansas historian, the late Alan W. Farley, has written it is "a common Wyandot word meaning 'abundle of sticks' and interpreted by the adage, 'in union there is strength.'"

While Quindaro Brown was growing up with the Wyandots in Ohio, Dayton-born Abelard Guthrie was serving throughout Mexico with the U.S. Indian service in the Mexican war. He returned to Ohio, where in the early 1840's he was an official of the U.S. Land office at Upper Sandusky, Ohio. But for some unexplained reason, his appointment was not renewed. He was without a job.

It was about that time he met the young woman that historians term "one of the most beautiful girls in the Wyandot nation."

He fell in love with Quindaro Brown. He was a rejected clerk, in love with the daughter of a chief. But he was not rejected by the Indian princess. She was willing to marry him.

Her father, the younger Adam Brown, would not permit the marriage. According to an early history of Kansas, he "did not take kindly to Guthrie."

The chief thought he saw a way to stop the romance. The Wyandots by treaty of 1842 sold their Ohio reservation to the United States and sent Silas Armstrong and George Clark to scout a new land on the banks of the Missouri.

On July 22, 1843, the site was occupied by the Wyandot tribe (English settlers later added another "t" and the French added the final "e"). Shortly after they arrived, John McIntire Armstrong built the first dwelling at 5th and Freeman.

With them was Quindaro Brown, whose father, according to historical accounts, had "carried her away to Kansas" in an attempt to prevent her marriage to Guthrie.

But Guthrie followed. His, and Quindaro's, persistence finally convinced the chief they should be allowed to marry.

So in 1844 the "Daughter of the Sun" wed Tak-key-yoh-shrah-tach. It was the name given Guthrie by the Indians and meant "man with two brains."

The name was appropriate. Guthrie went on to become a leader in the town company, which was bordered on the north by the Missouri river, east by 18th, south by Brown Ave. and west by 42nd.

Guthrie was an ardent free-stater who ran an underground railroad during the Civil War. Primarily under his leadership, the area became a thriving free-state port, attracting people from Kansas City, Leavenworth and Atchison, "pro-slavery ports filled with border ruffians."

In October, 1852, Guthrie was elected as a delegate to the 32nd Congress. Thirty-seven votes were cast at the Council house near 4th and State. All were for Guthrie.

As a Congressional delegate, Guthrie was largely responsible for the organization of the Nebraska territory, of which Kansas was a part. (The name Kansas comes from the Kansas Indians and means "people of the west wind.") [people of the south wind is the usual interpretation].

But in Kansas City, Kansas, Guthrie is better remembered for a decision he influenced at an earlier council - a meeting which was to name the town site. Said Guthrie: "It shall be called Quindaro."