

EARLY TROUBLES WITH THE PAWNEES IN CASS COUNTY.

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Early one morning about the middle of April, 1859, John Hess, now of Wabash, Cass County, came to our claim house, hammered on the door and said, "Yump right away quick! Dem d--n Pawnees stole my mooles!"

By sunrise a party consisting of John Hess, Henry Cook, Theobald Vallery, John Krauth and myself were in the saddle, with our blankets and arms, and on the trail. We struck it quite plain, near Squire Thompson's place on Cedar Creek (now the Captain Hoover farm), ~~at the~~ We went nearly to the head of Pawnee Creek which was a running vank-full of ice and water, and then across to Salt Creek ford, arriving about 4 o'clock p.m., and found the few settlers flocked in there, expecting an attack from the Pawnee. We stopped at "Old Wiggins'" house, on the east side of the creek, just where Dennis Dean now lives. He was very much excited, as the Indians had killed one of his oxen (he had only two,) and what worried him most they had stolen the only ax he had, and another could not be got nearer than Plattsmouth, involving a trip of two or three days, and he had nothing to cut wood with in the meantime.

While we were there a laughable incident occurred. Henry Cook and I rode down to the ford to water our horses, and right at the edge of the creek stood a squaw, loaded down with plunder from some house below. She had the complete end of a cottage bedstead strapped on her back with thongs of buffalo hide passing around her waist. The upper part ~~of~~ slanted back from her body and secured by a band which went around her forehead. In the space

between her back and the boards she had a lot of clothes, a feather bed tick, about two bushels of corn and sundry other articles. She had taken off one moccasin, and while she was stooping over, in the act of taking off the other I rode up to her, and before she knew I was there slashed the thongs with my hunting knife letting the whole load drop. She gave one scream and plunged into the creek with the bedstead still hanging to her, and by the time she got to the west bank the water was up to her nose. She caught hold of some willows ^{dragged(?)} waffed herself and dropping her trail, started for the west on a run.

Our supper consisted of a small piece of bacon, plenty of corn-bread, mixed with salt and water only, and coffee made of parched corn. The next day our breakfast was the same, without the bacon. ~~Vallery and Krauth were missing~~ The next morning, one night gone, ^{a week later} Vallery and Krauth were missing, we found them at home. They deserted because fear of scalping was stronger in them than love of glory.

We remained all day at the ford, waiting for reinforcements, and thinking we would have a little fun with the Pawnee. At night part of us moved up to Samuel Stambaugh's bridge over the Wahoo creek, northwest of Ashland. We took some planks from the bridge and put out a guard, William D. Hill and Samuel Aughe armed with shotguns, the rest of us taking shelter beside a hay stack as it was quite cold. We were undisturbed until, just as it began to get light in the morning, we heard a challenge from the guards and running to the bridge, about fifty yards away, we found that they, William D. Hill and John Aughe, had a young Indian ^{surrounded} woman on the bridge. He had stolen a pony belonging to one of the settlers ^{Totten} (trotter) and had a sack and a blanket filled with corn.

We kept the pony, but thought it best to let the Indian go, as he was only a boy about eighteen or twenty years old. We escorted him over the bridge, pointed to ~~it~~ the west and yelled at him to go. The boys shot over him to stimulate his retreat and when he looked back and saw the guns trained down on him, he began jumping zig-zag.

The following winter and apring most of the Pawnee's were camped on the banks and islands of the Platte River. The deviltry of two men who had been left in charge of some shanties situated on the east bank of Salt Creek, a short distance below the place where the B. & M. Railroad depot now stands led to these troubles with the Pawnee. About ten days before we started on our expedition these men ran off with twenty ponies and mules belonging to the Pawnee and two Indians who followed their trail were supposed to have been killed as they were never seen again. When the Pawnee robbed the houses, they took everything they could carry and destroyed the rest. In ripping a feather bed open, they found two fresh Indian scalps, which set them wild. This occurred the day we got to Salt Creek Ford. We sent a courier for Samuel Allis the old interpreter who came the second day and went to the Pawnee camp alone. He would not let any of us go with him for fear we would make trouble.

We sta^ded at the Ford for several days, but didn't get^g our mules, but fortunately ^{also we} didn't get into any difficulty. At present I recall the name of the members of the expedition as follows; William D. Hill, Charles S. Wortman of South Bend; John, James and Jacob Aughe; Lee Warbritton; John, Curtis and Nelson Sheffer of Ashland, and our Plattsmouth boys.