



Le Mars Sentinel

FRIDAY, MAY 1, 1914.

EARLY INDIAN RAIDS

(Continued from Last Friday)
It was about 5 o'clock p. m. when Botsford got to camp. Tennis had taken his boat and had gone down the river to attend his traps. He was on the west side of a ravine that emptied into the river a short distance below the fork. Tennis landed his boat at the mouth of this ravine and walked up the ravine, calculating to set a trap for a fox. He got his trap set and was about to leave when he chanced to look up. There stood a big buck Indian looking at him, with his gun standing by his side. Tennis was puzzled what to do. He had nothing but his hatchet to defend himself with so he ran for his boat. Being a cripple he could not make very good headway. When he reached his boat he looked back to see what had become of the Indian. The Indian was running to cut him off on the river above. Instead of paddling up the river to camp, Tennis put the boat across the river and landed opposite the mouth of the ravine and walked up on the east side of the river to the forks. Our camp was in the forks.

Tennis came up on the east side of the river, opposite our camp. His boat was down the river a half mile. Botsford's boat was up the east fork three fourths of a mile. My boat was a long distance up the west fork. It was now dark and no boat at camp to bring Tennis over. Botsford and I looked around and found a tree on the bank of the river that we thought would reach across by felling it properly. The river at this point was not very wide but very swift. When we felled the tree the top scarcely reached across. Tennis succeeded in getting on but he had scarcely got planted before the current washed the tree around, with Tennis clinging to the top of the tree. As luck would have it, the tree did not break clear of the stump, but swung around against the bank and Tennis succeeded in getting ashore and to camp.

We held a council after we got Tennis to camp and we made up our minds that from the Indian sign we had seen that day it would be best for us to hide our valuable furs and leave camp for a while and go down to Calliope and stay there for a few days. We had no boats at our camp with which we could cross over to the east side of the river, which we had to be on in order to get down to Calliope. There was an island up to east fork of the river about three miles from camp. We concluded to go up to that island and hunt up a tree that we could fell from the shore on to the island, and then find a tree on the island that we could fell to the eastern shore of the river.

We succeeded in getting over onto the eastern shore. It was about thirty miles down to Calliope and we were in doubts as to whether Tennis could make the trip, he being crippled, but thought he could. It was now about 10 o'clock p. m. We struck out down the valley for Calliope. After traveling about ten miles we went into camp; Tennis had given out and could go no further. When daylight came Tennis was in such bad shape that we concluded that one of us would go down to Calliope and get a team to haul Tennis down.

We had been at Calliope only a few days when a party came along from Sioux City, one by the name of George Christy (afterwards a partner of mine in the trapping and hunting business,) and the other a young man by the name of Pinckney. They had an ox team and were bound for Rock river on a trapping expedition. They stopped over night at Calliope with us. We told them the experiences that we had gone through only a few days before they came along. Our stories did not alarm Christy any; he had been among the Indians for some time; but Pinckney wanted to turn back.

We made up a party to go back up to where we had left our camp on Rock river two weeks before. In the party were Botsford, Christy, Pinckney and myself. Tennis stayed at Calliope to spend his trapping there. We prevailed on Pinckney to take us up to where we had left our camp. When we arrived there we found the things just as we had left them, not a thing disturbed. The Indians had pulled out about the same time we did and there was none to be seen around. Pinckney and Botsford made up their minds that they would not stay with Christy and me. They took the team and went back down the river. That left Christy and me up there alone with only one house within seventy-five miles of us, the one then at Calliope.

Soon after Botsford and Pinckney left us we succeeded in killing a large bull elk. We took his hide off and dried it and dried a lot of the meat. We had no tent with us, so we used the elk hide for shelter. No rain fell that spring. (1864) until June. We moved our camp from the forks up the west fork of the river six miles, went into camp in a side ravine and established ourselves in a favorable place so that the Indians could not get on to us without being seen. We had a fine bloodhound with us, which we used in searching the banks of streams before we would attend our traps. We could hear the Indians shooting ducks the man whom we had left there in and could see their tracks, but could not get sight of them. Christy said that there was a bad sign, that they were up man got ready to quitting that you to some devilry and if we did not get back to the settlements, we would keep a sharp lookout they would get us before we got back to the settlements.

ments. At that time I had not had as much experience with the Indians as Christy had.

We stayed on the Rock river trapping until the 15th of April, 1864. Our provisions were getting short, so we moved down stream, making several camps before reaching the mouth of Rock river. Our animals were plentiful all the way down. The evening we reached the mouth of the river, as we were passing along under a high bluff on the east side of the river, our dog was ranging along in the timber on the shore. The dog scared up a wild turkey, which lit on a tree that was leaning over the stream directly over me. I was paddling the rear boat, that carried the furs and bedding and what little grub we had. I had my shotgun lying near me. It was loaded with coarse shot. I fired at the turkey and the recoil of the gun sank the boat, and before I could get out of my seat I was in water three feet deep. We had to stop and dry out our bedding, and we camped there that night. We had a supper of beaver meat straight that night.

The next morning we moved down to the mouth of the river. We camped in a large willow patch that was near the forks. For better protection from the Indians we concluded to camp near the middle of the willow patch and near a large cottonwood log that lay on the bank of the river. The waters of the river had washed the bank away from under the log, which left about fifteen feet of the log projecting out over the water. We spread our bedding out to dry and had cooked a turkey which I had killed up at the bluffs the day before. We were eating our turkey when we heard someone coming down the river in a boat. We did not know of any white men being above us on the river, and thought sure it was Indians. The boat was coming down on the side we were on and would have to pass under the log that was projecting out over the river. The parties in the boat would have to come within fifteen feet of us before they could see us. We got our guns ready to get the drop on them when they made their appearance under the log. The bow of the boat came in view, but instead of Indians a white man was sitting in the boat.

We had him stop with us. He had been camped on the Rock river above where Christy and I were camped. A man from Minnesota had a string of trappers scattered through the west on the heads of the Little Sioux river, the Big Sioux, Rock and Jim rivers. This man furnished each trapper his outfit, provisions for six months and in return the trappers would turn over to the party that furnished them one-half of the furs caught. It was a good trade for both parties. This man who came down the Rock river to our camp lost his camp by fire. He lost everything, coat, vest, etc., and he had nothing on but a thin shirt. He had a Dutch oven partly filled with burnt flour. Christy and I had him stay with us and not risk going down the river alone, for the Indians would probably have got him if he had undertaken it.

Beaver was plentiful at the mouth of the river, so we concluded to stop there and trap a few days. We had nothing to eat in camp except the burnt flour. It was six miles down to Calliope from our camp. I set out a few traps and Christy went down to Calliope to get some provisions to last us for a few days. When Christy arrived at Calliope he found the windows boarded up and everything indicated that the people had left. Christy could find nothing to eat, so he came back to camp and reported what he had found. I knew the people there had no intention of leaving and that something had happened.

The next morning we took up the traps that I had put out, picked our camp up and dropped down the river. In going down, before we reached Calliope, we put out a few traps for beaver. When we reached Calliope I found things as Christy had reported. The indications were that they had packed in a hurry and got out as quickly as they could. We were ignorant of what had happened, but knew that it was something serious. We packed our furs and luggage up to the house, the house being only a short distance from the river, and were getting dinner, beaver meat and burnt flour being the only thing we had to cook, when we noticed several horsemen coming over the bluffs, a short distance down the valley. We could not make out whether they were Indians or white men, but we finally concluded they were Indians and that we had better prepare to receive them. We got our guns and ammunition upstairs, punched a lot of holes between the logs and waited for them to come.

When the horsemen came up so that we could make out who they were, they turned out to be a detail of soldiers that had been sent out to look us up, thinking that the Indians had probably killed us. They had made three tries to find us, but never had succeeded in locating our camp. The command was under Col. Pattee, of the Sixth Iowa cavalry. We found out from the colonel why the people had left Calliope. Col. Pattee had a brother who was trapping with a man by the name of Whiteman, above the mouth of Rock river on the Big Sioux river. When they had closed out their trapping, they came down to Calliope and stopped over night there. Tennis could hear the Indians shooting ducks the man whom we had left there in and could see their tracks, but could not get sight of them. Christy said that there was a bad sign, that they were up man got ready to quitting that you to some devilry and if we did not get back to the settlements, we would keep a sharp lookout they would get us before we got back to the settlements.

(he being a cripple) ride down in the boat with Pattee and tend his traps going down.

Whiteman started across the bend, and, when part way over, several shots were fired in the bend. A flock of wild geese flew up and Whiteman concluded that Pattee and Tennis had scared the geese up and did not think any more about it. He crossed over the bend to the river below and waited there for Pattee to come along with the boat. Finally he got tired of waiting and started up the river to meet the boat. He followed around the bend to where he had heard the shots fired. Up on the bank, on the opposite side of the river, he found the boat with everything gone out of her. There were a few pieces of thin bedding scattered around on the bank.

A small band of Indians had followed Pattee and Whiteman down from where they had been trapping on the Sioux river, waiting for an opportunity and a favorable place to do their dirty work. The Indians had watched Pattee and Tennis leave Calliope and had scattered themselves in a bend of the river and when the boat came along they killed both Pattee and Tennis and took all their furs.

As soon as Whiteman learned what had happened he hurried up to Calliope and gave the alarm. The people packed up and set out for Sioux City. Then they informed Col. Pattee of his brother's death. He immediately detailed a squad of soldiers and went up to where the killing took place. The soldiers dragged the river a distance but could not find the bodies of the two men who had been killed. Whiteman saved his life by letting Tennis have his seat in the boat that morning but was killed a short time afterward by Indians while out hunting stray horses.

Christy and I went up the river from Calliope before we left for Sioux City, to take up the traps that we had put out. Coming down, after taking up one trap, we were rounding a bend in the river when we heard a noise over in the bend. There was a low place next to the bank, where the water would run across when the river was up. When we looked in the direction where the noise came from we saw the tops of the heads of four Indians. They were running across to shut us off at the lower end of the bend. Why they did not fire into us when we struck the bend above was a mystery to us. We were probably out in the river too far for the boat to float to shore. On the east side of the river, opposite the bend that we were passing around, there was a cut bank, fifteen feet high, that made it impossible for us to escape in that direction. I had my shotgun with me that morning, thinking that we might see some wild geese. The gun was loaded with buckshot. We were in a canoe. Christy was in the stern, steering and I was in the bow. I had Christy turn the bow of the boat towards the shore where we expected the attack from. I stood up in the boat with my shotgun ready to fire at the first topknot that would show up above the grass. They failed to make the attack. They could have killed us easy enough but they knew that one or probably two of their number would be killed at the same time.

Christy and I passed up the river in the fall and camped near where Pattee and Tennis were killed in the spring. When they were killed the river was high and the force of the water carried their bodies under the bank among a mass of roots, where they were lodged. We found Tennis' wooden leg, his belt and we also found human bones along down the river, on the sandbar. The remnants of the skeletons of Pattee and Tennis were never gathered together.

Whiteman, Pattee's partner, who was trapping with him during the early spring of 1864, was killed by Indians while out looking for horses, the latter part of May, 1864.

After disposing of our pelts in Sioux City we rested there a few days and went back to Calliope to spend the summer.

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