

SATTERLEE CLARK'S PERILOUS JOURNEY

Satterlee Clark and Peter Pauquette acted as scouts during the Winnebago war, and the former played perhaps the most important part in securing the troops from General Atkinson, the chief officer in command, which perhaps averted a massacre of the thirty men remaining in Fort Winnebago, with several women and children.

Mr. Clark's account of his adventures is simple and graphic: "In 1831, in violation of a treaty stipulation, the Sauk and Fox Indians, under Black Hawk and the Prophet, crossed the Mississippi into Illinois. Black Hawk was a Fox Indian and the Prophet was a Winnebago, who, with a small band, became discontented and left the Winnebagoes, joining the Sauk and Fox tribes among whom they had intermarried.

General Atkinson was ordered to remove them. They offered to go back and remain for 60,000 bushels of corn, and as corn was only five cents a bushel he gave it to them and they retired.

"The following summer, thinking to get 60,000 bushels of corn quite easily, they again crossed the river and again General Atkinson was ordered, to remove them. Instead of buying corn of them, he ordered all of the available troops into the field, and the President ordered out the Illinois militia under the command of General Henry and General Alexander, all under the command of General Atkinson.

The Indians started up Fox River pursued by the troops, committing occasional depredations as they went along. After they got into Wisconsin the troops lost track of them, and General Atkinson continued up Rock River to where the village of Fort Atkinson stands, where he established his headquarters and built a temporary fort.

BLACK HAWK THREATENS FORT WINNEBAGO

"In the meantime Black Hawk, learning from the Winnebagoes, who also promised to assist him, that only thirty men remained at Fort Winnebago, determined to burn it and massacre its inmates.

They accordingly came and encamped on the Fox River about four miles above Swan Lake and about eight miles from the fort. Every possible means that could be devised was adopted to protect the fort and save the lives of the inhabitants, most of whom were women and children; but after all had been done that was possible the commanding officer concluded that without reinforcements we would be lost, and determined to send to General Atkinson for troops. I was selected for that duty for several reasons; among which was my thorough acquaintance with the country, and another was the probability that the Winnebagoes would not harm me.

CLARK SENT FOR REENFORCEMENTS

"Every day some Winnebago would come to me and advise me to go at night and stay in his wigwam, where, he said, I would be safe. At 9 o'clock at night I left the fort with many a 'God speed you,' armed with a small Ruggles rifle, my dispatches, a tomahawk and a bowie-knife. I crossed the Fox River at a shallow point just above where the public stables used to stand, and keeping the Indian trail that led from there to White Crow's village on Lake Kosh-ko-nong on my right,

I traveled rapidly all night, walking up hill and running down hill and on a level. I struck the trail several times during the night, but left it immediately, as I feared that some Indians might be

encamped upon it whose dogs would discover me before I would discover them. I arrived safely at the fort (Atkinson) at half past 11 o'clock in the forenoon, and delivered my dispatches to General Atkinson, who sent 3,000 men at once to relieve Fort Winnebago.

ON RETURN OVERTAKES MOUNTED MILITIA

"I slept till 4 o'clock in the afternoon and then started on my return, following the trail of the mounted militia for twelve miles, when I passed them and reached the head of a stream that used to be called Rowan's Creek, about twelve miles from the fort, shortly before daylight; and fearing to go further till night, I crawled into some brush and went to sleep.

"As soon as it was dark, I left my hiding place and returned to the fort as near as possible by the route I left it, arriving between 10 and 11 o'clock P. M. I reported that the troops were on the way and would arrive next evening. We kept close watch all that night and at 4 o'clock P. M. next day the troops arrived. It may surprise some of my readers that I should travel so rapidly, and the mounted troops should be so long on the road. But you must recollect the marshes were very wet at that time, that the whole country was a wilderness, and that when I jumped into a stream and waded through or walked across the marsh the troops had to build bridges and causeways.

"The war would have been ended in two days if the militia had been in condition to follow the Indians; but the horses needed food and rest, rations had to be issued to the men, many of them had not a change of underclothing, and it was absolutely necessary to wait at least one day at the fort.

FATAL STAMPEDE OF TROOPERS' HORSES

"The second night the horses took fright (probably at some Winnebago Indians), and there was a regular stampede. Several hundred started with a noise like thunder, running so close together that when one was so unfortunate as to face a tree he was either killed or so badly injured as to be unable to proceed, and was run over by the whole drove.

Between the bank of the Wisconsin and the point of land between there and the fort, thirty-seven horses were found dead. They took the trail they came on and ran to the prairie, a distance of about sixteen miles. Over sixty horses were killed, and it was late next day before those recovered were brought back. This, of course, occasioned another delay, and it was not till the fifth day that they left the fort in pursuit of the Indians.

"BATTLE" OF THE WISCONSIN

"The enemy, in the meantime, went to the Four Lakes, where, as I learned later, they were advised to cross the Wisconsin and the Mississippi as soon as possible. A few reliable Winnebagoes, under Peter Pauquette and myself, were secured for scouts. We had no difficulty in following their trail and gained upon them rapidly, overtaking them on the bank of the Wisconsin about twenty-five miles below, where the battle of the Wisconsin was fought.

"That battle made many heroes, and so it should. About one hundred and twenty-five half-starved Indians defended the pass against nearly three thousand whites, while the remainder of the Indians, in plain sight, were crossing the Wisconsin with the women and children, and as soon as these were safe the Indians broke and ran. Then came the struggle for scalps. Every man who could run started down the hill at top speed, my Indian scouts and myself far ahead of the militia, and I was about thirty feet ahead of all. Just as I commenced raising the hill on the other side of the valley, Pauquette passed me on horseback, and as he went by I caught his horse by the tail and held on till we reached the top of the hill, where we found four dead Indians.

Pauquette took one scalp, I took one, and the Indian scouts took the other two.

"The Indians lost four killed all told and the whites, one. This ended the battle of the Wisconsin about which so much has been written.

END OF THE BLACK HAWK WAR

"The Indians traveled as fast as possible to the Mississippi, near the mouth of the Bad Axe River. I went home. Shortly after Capt. Alexander Johnston was ordered to take command of the regular troops, endeavor to intercept the Indians and prevent their crossing the Mississippi.

A steamboat was sent up the Mississippi from Fort Crawford, commanded by Jefferson Davis. He drove the Indians back, and they were all killed or taken prisoners except Black Hawk and the Prophet, with their families, who crossed the river before the steamboat arrived.

"Gen. Winfield Scott offered a reward of \$2,000 for the capture of Black Hawk and the Prophet, which was earned by a Winnebago called Little Thunder. All were then taken to Rock Island, where General Scott had established his headquarters. From there the leaders were taken to all the large cities of the country, to show them how impossible it was for them to wage successful war against the whites.

"That ended the Black Hawk war."