

REMINISCENCE NUMBER THREE

My next experience was with a family by the name of Stevens who had dropped in here from Knob Noster, Mo. The family consisted of the father and mother, two or three sons and one daughter. They occupied a hewed log house about one-half mile south of the village of Stanton, in Miami county, close to the east line of Franklin county.

The house was located in a body of heavy timber and in a clearing of an acre or so. It was well located for defense, and escape too.

The family came to Stanton in the fall of 1863; they seemed to be living at their ease, never being engaged in any gainful occupation. The young men of the family would absent themselves for weeks at a time, then they would return and be around home for three or four weeks—and by some strange coincidence horses disappeared about that time until twelve or fifteen head of horses and mules were taken from about where is now Rantoul and Stanton. More and more the people became convinced that there was some connection between the loss of their horses and this family. It was noised around that the old man and his sons knew they were suspected and were prepared for any emergency by having the house port-holed. At the earnest solicitation of Wm. Tulloss, then probate judge of this county, I consented to try to make the arrest.

Mr. Tulloss was a man of irreproachable character and he transmitted to all his descendants the same lofty ideal of right and justice. (He was father of Wm. Tulloss who lived a few miles out of Ottawa, and grandfather of William G. Tulloss, our present representative). At an agreed time I went to Stanton and met there fifty or seventy-five men armed with all sorts of guns ready for a fray. I saw in a moment that the least excitement might produce serious results. I had never been

in Stanton before and knew nothing of the location or surroundings of this man Stevens except by hearsay, and I was anxious to see for myself what I was up against. So taking two men who were conversant with the location and surroundings I made a reconnaissance in my own behalf; I found the condition the same as had been stated to me.

Returning to Stanton, I told the men there was much more danger of their shooting each other than of their being shot by the Stevens.

Forming in two lines, all mounted, we marched to a point three or four hundred feet from the Stevens's house, then deployed to right and left, fairly encircling the place. I immediately dismounted, also two other men that I had selected did the same and accompanied me to the front door of the house. I rapped on the door for admittance. A voice asked who was there. My answer was, "Open the door." Near the door was a load of poles twelve or fifteen feet long and five or six inches thick at the butt, evidently hauled up for fire wood. The door was made of oak puncheons and hung with wooden hinges. Silently but quickly we seized one of those poles and used it for a battering ram. After two or three swings we let it go against that door and it fairly jumped from its fastenings, falling flatly upon the floor without breaking. Instantly I was inside, revolver in hand and behind were two men equally well armed. At the command, "hold up your hands," they obeyed quickly, women and all. The fact is, they were terror stricken by the terrific assault.

It was a weird sight to me, those three men and those two women pale with terror, in that dimly lighted room. Leaving the women at the house the men were taken to Stanton.

Having performed the task of arresting them, I returned to my office at Ohio City.

REMINISCENCE NUMBER FOUR

My fourth experience was with Watecha a Quapaw Indian, a son of the Chief of the Quapaws. This band numbered about four hundred.

They came up from the south and were known as refugees, and were being supported by the government.

On the night of January 31, 1865 William Hastings was shot and mortally wounded at or near Coal Creek, just north of Williamsburg in this county. That part of the county was at that time an Indian Reservation belonging to the Sac and Foxes.

Mr. Hastings was a farmer residing in the extreme eastern part of county. He had left his farm temporarily and was moving to Ottumwa in Coffey county, on account of the better school facilities in that town; they were an estimable family and much thought of by their neighbors and friends and his murder was a great shock to the community.

At the date above mentioned Mr. Hastings was taking a load of wheat from his farm to Ottumwa; he was about to go into camp and it was getting dark when an Indian rode up and began talking to him. Suddenly the Indian dropped behind the wagon and deliberately shot him in the back.

Then wheeling his horse he rode out of range and stopped, watching for Hastings to die. Mr. Hastings, though mortally wounded got down from his wagon and unhitching his team climbed on to one of the horses and leading the other started back to the home of a settler, Mr. Douglass a distance of four or five miles. The Indian seeing that Hastings was alive and was probably armed, rode rapidly away into the fast growing darkness. Hastings on arriving at the cabin of Douglass was lifted from his horse and a physician hastily summoned from Ohio City, who pronounced the wound fatal. Mr. Hastings was able to give quite a minute description of the Indian. From that a small posse of men, the next morning was formed to hunt for the In-

dian; they first went to a camp a couple of miles east of this town where about four hundred refugees were encamped, but found no one answering the description given by Hastings. They then went to the camp west of this place on the Island where four hundred more were in camp, and there they found a young man answering the description given by Hastings. The Indian was there among his friends and they were afraid to attempt his arrest. So they resorted to a ruse to get him. This posse knew that I knew most of the Indians as I had had charge of them at one time for a couple of years, so they told him Sheldon wanted him to come right down to Ottawa, he wanted to see him.

The Indian hesitated and said "What Sheldon want?" They answered they didn't know. Finally he said, "I go." Getting his horse and his revolver he started along with them, and with them went fifteen or twenty of his friends, all mounted and armed, quite a formidable looking outfit.

On arriving at the village one of the posse rushed into my office and hastily told me of the murder of Hastings, and that they thought they had the man and that he would be in here in a minute, and asked me to arrest him. He had scarcely finished before the room was full of Indians. The Indian spoke first and said, "What you want?" "I wanted to see you," and he said, "What for?" I waked boldly up to him and said, "Give me your revolver," and to my surprise he unbuckled his belt and handed it to me. I then stepped into another room and got a pair of handcuffs and put on him. The posse looked on in astonishment at the scene being enacted before them. I then told the Indian why he was arrested, and Indian like he took it all stolidly and said not a word.

Mr. Robbins, the sheriff, was away and I thought to myself Mr. Hastings may still be alive and perhaps he

might identify him. So stepping out on the street I secured a team and buggy, and putting the Indian in the buggy and getting my horse, we struck out for Douglass' at a rapid gait

Douglass' cabin must have been near where Homewood now is. It was eight o'clock on our arrival and Hastings was alive, though sinking rapidly.

He knew me and I asked if he thought he could recognize his assailant if he saw him. He said he thought he could. I then brought in a brother of Ernest, and Mr. Hastings looked at him carefully, and said, "No, he isn't the man." I then brought another Indian and he looked at him and said, "No, he isn't the man." I then brought in Ernest and the moment he was brought close to Hastings he exclaimed, "Oh God, take him away, that's the man." Then Ernest

as he was led out says to me, "That man crazy."

Mr. Hastings died that night at three o'clock a. m.

Ernest Watecha had a preliminary examination at Ottawa, and was bound over for trial at the next term of the district court and taken to the Douglas county jail at Lawrence, where we kept all our prisoners.

He took a change of venue to Douglas county and was there tried and convicted of murder in the first degree, and later was hung in the Douglas county jail, Sheriff Ogden of Douglas officiating.

The tribe raised \$500.00 to aid in his defense. The old chief wanted I should intercede with Mrs. Hastings in Ernest's behalf; said he would give her forty ponies to release him. He said that was the way they settled things down in his country.