

bacon, potatoes, a dollar a pound. Crushed sugar, one dollar and a half; tea, five; coffee, two. After all were sold we lived for two weeks in March on beans and venison alone before mules could get through with their first load.

In April 1853, while hunting some thirty miles southeast of the store, we met a searching party who were looking for Jesse Starkey. He had been in the mountains several days but the tent he had brought with him had not been occupied. We spread out marching toward the upper Chowchilla in the high Sierras, having agreed to fire two quick shots from our revolvers in the event of anything unusual being found. I crossed a ridge of bare granite and discovered, some distance ahead, near a deep gorge, which has since become known as the Yosemite, a large thatched wigwam and several well built twig and grass huts. Crawling cautiously along to prevent surprise I finally discovered something lying in a heap of ashes in front of the principal campoody. There was not a sign of life to indicate that the tents were inhabited. I walked to the smouldering fire and was horrified to find the mutilated body of a white man, the back of his head roasting in a bed of coals, three arrows piercing his breast.

I fired my revolver and the party soon assembled to recognize Starkey, the teamster from Fort Miller whom the red devils had assassinated. We set fire to the wigwams and as the blaze and smoke ascended, shouts from Indians and shots from Starkey's rifle and revolver that the murderers had taken, were heard from a granite point high above us. It was agreed that we should leave a strong guard with Starkey's body until shovels could be procured to bury it, while we returned to our store to assemble volunteers to punish Starkey's murderers. The following day sixty well armed miners met at the crossing of Aqua Frio Creek where our store was located, accompanied by the sheriff and other county officers, all of whom placed themselves under the authority and guidance of Kit Carson and Alexander (Alexis) Godey, two famous Indian trailers who were mining on the Mariposa River. Fortifying ourselves with a hearty meal at noon, we cinched our animals tightly, for the trail over the granite foothills was rough, and mounted for a hard ride.

As members of the Yohamite tribe (the Indians pronounced it with a guttural h) the Chowchilla and the King's River tribes, had done more or less trading at our store I had become ac-

quainted with a number of them. One finely proportioned fellow about my age loafed about the place considerably and we found him exceptionally quick in packing goods upon mules for delivery to customers. Occasionally I trusted him to deliver goods at nearby places and he became known as Yankee Jim. Soon the chickens began to disappear, my favorite deer hound was missing but no one suspected Jim. However the night we came in with the news of Starkey's death Jim and our best pack mule could not be found. I told Carson we'd find him among the bad men we were after.

It was nearly sunset when we reached poor Starkey's body and night set in before the burial was completed. Our animals were staked out under guard, a hasty cold meal partaken of, and the blind trail taken towards the marauders who were composed, as we learned later, of renegades from all the tribes in middle and southern California. The night was clear, not a breath of air stirring. As we ascended towards and over the Chowchilla hills of bare granite the temperature dropped until a rifle barrel felt like ice, and our men began stamping to keep warm. At once both Carson and Godey halted their respective commands and in very forceful language gave us a lecture about trailing Indians like boys on a picnic. Before they had finished all realized that we were on no tom-fool errand.

Although suffering considerably from cold in the high altitude, the men obeyed instructions, moving silently and steadily through the bright star-lit night after their leaders. We had climbed nearly to the top of a high ridge about two in the morning and halted to rest. Kit said, "Church, we will go up on that spur and look over."

Arrived there he looked long and keenly out to the southeast and directed my sight to a point that appeared to be the head of a canyon some two miles distant, but which we found to be much farther.

"What do you see?"

"Nothing," I answered.

"Well, I make out a thin line of smoke, and that's where the d— Reds are camped!"

We rested for a while. Then observing the utmost caution about talking and striking our guns or heels against the rocks,

we moved forward in single file across the elevated plateau beyond which the Indians were asleep in camp. Then deploying out, we waited for the order to rush in and do our best. We were within a hundred yards of camp when the word was passed in whispers, and fearing they might have pickets out we crawled the last hundred feet on hands and knees. Not a breath seemed to break the awful hush. The suspense was terrible to many of us, for we expected a bloody hand to hand fight with desperadoes and but few had ever graduated in that sort of a contest.

Just as the eastern sky showed the tints of coming day a rooster crowed and a moment later a dark object moved slowly toward the smouldering brands that fed the line of smoke we had seen. Carson raised his rifle and took careful aim at the object as it hovered over the kindling embers. His rifle cracked and the poor thing, a squaw, dropped face downwards in the hot ashes as we rushed into a pandemonium of fleeing and fighting savages. The women and children remained in their wigwams, stupefied with fear. The men, about forty-six in number, and most of them in war paint, attempted to gain the head of the canyon which fell away from the plateau some fifteen feet onto heavy boulders. There we later found the dead and wounded after all the unwounded bucks had scattered. Only three of our men were wounded, none seriously.

After the skirmish an Indian appeared high up on a bald granite point, going away from us with his back bent low down in derision. McDermott, who owned a ranch on the lower Mariposa and who often came to our place for provisions and rifle practice at the three hundred yard target, said "Do you think I can wing that fellow?"

"Not unless you draw far over him," I replied.

He sank on one knee, fired, and the Indian tumbled in a heap. On going up to him we found Yankee Jim with a hole through his skull. Afterwards, searching the rancheria, we found a mule's hind quarter with my brand on the hip hanging from a pine tree. Other evidences of theft were found when we were gathering the squaws and children together to march them to the settlement. First we gave them a hearty meal roasting the fowls found in camp, among them the rooster that sounded the savages' death knell. After they had gorged themselves to repletion, we assisted in burying the old squaw who had fallen in the ashes,

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then destroyed the wigwams and all the cooking utensils. Placing the squaws with some old Indians and the dozen or more prisoners in the center, we began our slow march to the place where we had left our animals. Placing double guard around our captives we camped there at nightfall. The next day we passed our store and about dusk the Indians were taken in charge by the Sheriff and his deputies at Mariposa. Federal officers were communicated with and after about two months confinement, the Indians were liberated on their promise of good behavior. Their word was good for that was the last trouble between the Whites and Indians in that country.

July 1st, 1853. I sold my stock of merchandise, good will and store to Turner and Holt of Guadalupe three miles above Bridgeport. I went straight to Mariposa and put up for the night with Agent Gardner of Wells Fargo and Company. He and his young wife from Boston had just recently been sent there. They kept house back of the Express Office, a large room serving for living and dining room with two bedrooms and kitchen adjoining. Mr. Gardner suggested that if I would remain over a day or two he would get up a dancing party with the aid of the young fellows around the Southern Hotel. I agreed and assisted in distributing the invitations. Among others, my friends in Aqua Frio were asked, including S. Sweet and three young matrons who accepted on the condition that they could bring their babies. The dance took place the following evening, some fifty all told assembled. Eight mothers with babes were assigned a room where the little ones could be comfortable and beyond hearing the music. Towards midnight Mrs. Gardner suggested changing the clothing of the youngsters which four of us did, and I, for one, was glad to get on the early stage for San Francisco.

August 13th. Under the name of Barstow, Church and Company I opened a grocery jobbing house on the present site of 317-19 California Street. For a one story and cellar brick building sixty by ninety feet we paid eight hundred dollars a month in advance to James H. Ray, Agent for the owners. Thomas J. Poulterer, Auctioneer, occupied the store adjoining on the west while Daniel Provost had that on the east.

After being in business one month I found my partners had neither experience nor capacity for conducting the business, and