

V. INDIAN BORDER WARS.

In the early settlement of this part of the great northwest there was a great deal of trouble between the Indians and the white people that settled in among the Indians for the purpose of eventually driving them out and occupying their lands. This naturally created bad blood among the Indians, and they determined to resist the encroachments of the white intruders to the last extremity.

A few miles south of Maxinkuckee lake, on the north bank of Eel river, about six miles from the point where that river enters into the Wabash, near where Logansport has since been built, was a large Indian village known as Ke-na-pa-com-a-qua, whose inhabitants were of the Shawnee and Pottawattomie tribes, whose principal chief was the Shawnee Prophet and his brother, the famous Tecumseh, who were at that time temporarily located at what was known as "Prophet's Town," near the confluence of the Tippecanoe and Wabash rivers, several miles below. That was a few years after the close of the war of 1812. Traders and explorers and those looking for homes were finding their way into this section of the unexplored west, and quite a number of pioneers had pitched their tents, or erected log cabins, and settled down to the realities of life among the Indians in the wilderness.

The Indians were not very friendly at best toward the white settlers and especially were they opposed to these intruders taking possession of the watercourses leading to the southwest. The few white settlers that were attempting to make a settlement at that time were continually harassed and annoyed by these vicious warriors, and they had no assurance when they went to bed at night in their, little cabin home that their scalps would not be taken off before morning. These depredations and petty annoyances were kept up so continually from this village that the government

decided to send a regiment of troops, then doing service at various points along the river Ohio, for the purpose of quieting the disturbances. Accordingly about five hundred men under Capt. Wilkenson moved some time in June 1791, for the scene of the outbreaks. According to the report of the expedition, after many days hard marching through the wilderness the little army reached the Wabash river at the very point for which the commander had aimed at the commencement of his march-a very remarkable circumstance, as finding one's way through the tangled wilderness of this part of the country at that time was like attempting to navigate the boundless ocean without compass or rudder.

Here the little army crossed the Wabash River, and, following the trail a north-by-east course a distance of three miles, Eel River was reached. While reconnoitering it was discovered that the Indians had taken the alarm and were flying in every direction from the village.

A general charge was ordered. The men forced their way over every obstacle, and plunged through the river with great bravery. The Indians were unable to make the slightest resistance. Six warriors and, in the hurry and confusion of the charge, two squaws and a child were killed. Thirty-four prisoners were taken with a loss on the part of the whites of two men killed and one wounded. "I found the village," says Capt. Wilkenson in the report of the battle, "scattered along the Eel River for full three miles, on an uneven, scrubby oak barrens, intersected alternately by bogs almost impassable, and impervious thickets of plum, hazel and blackjacks. I encamped in the town-Ke-na-pa-com-a-qu-a-that evening, and the next morning I cut up the corn scarcely in the milk, burned the cabins, mounted my young warriors, squaws and papooses in the best manner in my power, and, leaving two Indian squaws and a child with a short talk, took up the line of march for a Kick-a-poo town, on the Wabash, where disturbances had been reported. Not being able to discover any path in the direct course of the Kickapoo town, I marched by the road leading to the Tippecanoe, in the hope of finding some diverging trail, which might favor my design. I camped that night about six miles, from Ke-na-pa-com-a-qu-a, and marched next morning at 4 o'clock. My course continued west until 9 o'clock, when I turned to the northwest on a small hunting path, and at a short distance I launched into the boundless prairies of the west, with the intention to pursue that course until I could find a road which leads from the Pottawattomies of Lake Michigan immediately to the town I sought. With this view I pushed forward through bog after bog, to the saddle skirts in mud and water; and after persevering for eight hours I found myself environed on all sides by morasses which forbade my advancing, and at the same time rendered it difficult for me to extricate my little army. The way by which we had entered was so much beaten and softened by the horses that it was almost impossible to return by that route, and my guides pronounced the morass in front impassable. A chain of thin groves extending in the direction of the Wabash at this time presented itself to the left. It was necessary I should gain the groves, and for this purpose I dismounted, went forward, and, leading my horse through a bog to the armpits in mud and water, with great difficulty and fatigue I accomplished my object; and changing my course to southwest I regained the Tippecanoe road and

encamped on it at 7 o'clock, after a march of thirty miles, which broke down several of my horses. "I was in motion next morning at 4 o'clock, and reached the Tippecanoe village by noon, and found that it had just been abandoned. After the destruction of this town last June the Indians had returned and cultivated their corn, which I found in high perfection. To refresh my horses and give time to cut down the corn, I determined to halt until next morning. In the course of a day I had discovered some murmurings and discontent among the men and reluctance to advance further into the enemy's country. This induced me to call for a state of the horses and provisions, when, to my surprise and mortification, 220 horses were returned lame and tired, with barely five days provisions for the men. Under these discouraging circumstances was compelled to abandon my designs and return to the Ohio River, where I arrived on the 21st of August, after a march by actual computation of 451 miles."

Precisely over what territory Capt, Wilkenson's little army traveled in their skirmish after the Indians in this region cannot be ascertained to a certainty, but it is quite certain that it struck the "boundless prairie," it was in the neighborhood of Kewanna and Bruce's lake in Fulton county, and also in the region west of Maxinkuckee lake southwest of the now town of Culver in Marshall County, as there was said to be a village or retreat there on a spot which was so completely surrounded with bogs and marshes as to be almost inaccessible.

The Indian trail the captain was trying to find, leading from Lake Michigan to the Kickapoo town, came by way of South Bend, Sumption's prairie, thence by way of Potato and Pine creek, near Knott's mill in Polk township, Mal-shall county; thence in the direction of the old La Porte road to the west of Plymouth and near the old brewery; thence along the west bank of Yellow river to the village at Twin lakes; thence through the Burr Oak flats near Culver and west of the lake by way of the Kewanna prairie and Bruce's lake, and so on to Logansport and Winamac. There were several other trails, but this was the one he was trying to find.

After the Indian Wars Had Ceased,

About the time the territory embraced in what is now northern Indiana first began to be settled, the regular, or more properly the irregular Indian wars and outbreaks in the Northwest Territory, of which this region was a part, had practically ceased, and most of the warriors had gone west to assist their tribes in resisting further encroachments of the whites upon what they believed to be their inalienable rights. Those that were left here were mostly old men, women and children, sick and crippled and otherwise helpless, among whom were a number of chiefs who had charge of the remnants of the bands that inhabited the various villages scattered promiscuously .all over the county.

Noted Indian Chiefs.

Among the more or less distinguished Indians having or assuming authority, who remained here until the last, and who were well remembered by the older settlers of the county, were Aube-nau-bee, Nas-wau-gee, Ben-ak, Pe-ash-way, Ni-go, Marshall and others. Most of these had seen a good

deal of service, and had endured many hardships and privations before they were finally overcome and compelled to surrender to the advancing march of civilization.

Some of them had been active participants with the Shawnee Prophet, under whose spiritual guidance the noted battle of Tippecanoe had been fought, and his brother, the famous Te-cum-seh. Prior to this midnight fight these chiefs and many of their followers frequently made pilgrimages from the different camps about Maxinkuckee lake and the Tippecanoe to what was known as "Prophet's Town," near where the Tippecanoe river enters into the Wabash: The town had been established by the Prophet and his brother, Te-cum-seh, and the inhabitants were governed by religious fanaticism that had been worked up by the Prophet, who claimed supernatural powers. He was the John Alexander Dowie of his day among the Indians. His town was the center and capital of the religion he preached. Here the Great Spirit was supposed to dwell and here were performed the strange and mysterious rites with which the new worship was carried on. Hideous dances, midnight orgies, and self-inflicted tortures and the dark ceremonies of Indian magic occupied the time of the frenzied savages. The Prophet pretended to be in constant communication with the Great Spirit and to be instructed by Him to make known to the Indians that he could give celestial rewards for all who would become his followers, and he boldly laid claim to the power of foretelling future events, curing sickness, preventing death on the battlefield, and working all sorts of miracles; and to demonstrate the power, it is stated as a historical fact that he announced that on a certain day he would cause the sun to be darkened. By some means he had learned that there would be a total eclipse of the sun at a certain hour of a certain day. As the sun was darkened, as he predicted, his ignorant and superstitious followers were ever after easily controlled by him and his brother, Te-cum-seh, and the final outcome was the battle of Tippecanoe, November 7, 1811, which practically ended the Indian warfare in this part of the Northwest Territory. To the thousands of converts who had adopted the religion of the Prophet this sacred town was as Jerusalem to the Jews, or Mecca to the Mahommedans.

But Te-cum-seh was in every way superior to his brother, the Prophet, and had he been at home at the time of the battle of Tippecanoe (he was absent in Kentucky at the time) his good judgment would probably have prevented his brother, the Prophet, from precipitating a battle with Gen. Harrison at that time after having pledged his word of honor that he would not do so, at least until another conference could be held the next day.

Te-cum-seh is described as a perfect Apollo in form, his face oval, his nose straight and handsome, and his mouth regular and beautiful; his eyes were hazel, clear and pleasant in conversation, but like balls of fire when excited by anger or enthusiasm. His bearing is said to have been of a noble and lofty spirit, a true king of the forest. He was temperate in his habits, loving truth and honor better than life. His mind was of a high order, and he possessed a genius, which must have made him eminent in any age or country. Like many other warriors he had failed, yet like them he was great in defeat! His brother, the Prophet, had only one eye, and possessed a countenance of which every line revealed craft and deceptiveness.