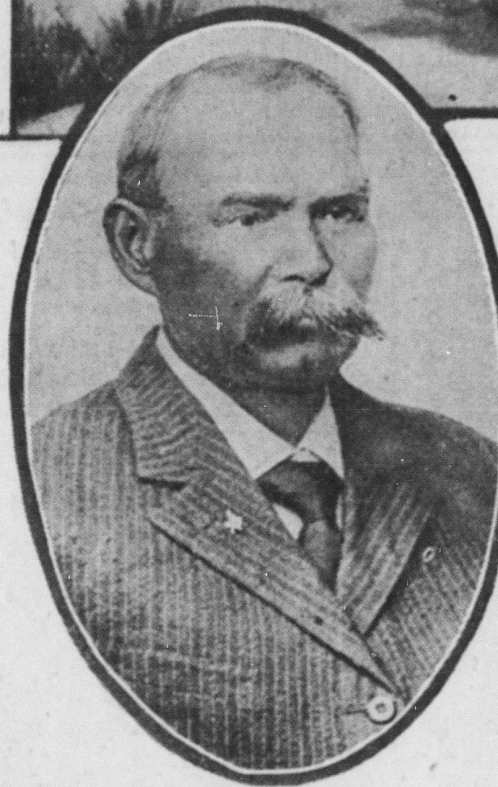


The Battle of Adobe Walls



THE CHARGE ON ADOBE WALLS

(From the Painting by J. N. Maschard)



Billy Dixon



Chief Quannah



Pe-ah-rite

By ELMO SCOTT WATSON

SIXTY years ago this month there occurred a fight, the story of which has become one of the classics of the Western frontier. That was the Battle of Adobe Walls which began on the early morning of June 27, 1874, when a war party of several hundred Comanche, Kiowa, Cheyenne, Arapahoe and Kiowa Apache Indians attacked a buffalo hunters' camp, occupied by 28 men and one woman, located on the south fork of the Canadian river in what is now Hutchinson county in the Texas Panhandle.

Characteristic of its ranking as a frontier classic is the number of men who, at one time or another have been called "survivors" of the Adobe Walls fight. Seemingly every old-timer who was ever a buffalo hunter on the Southwestern plains in the '70s has been accorded the distinction of "He fought at Adobe Walls" by amateur historians and imaginative newspaper reporters, and this, despite the fact that there has been in existence for many years an authentic list of the actual participants which might easily disprove the claim advanced in favor of spurious defenders of that outpost of the frontier.

Under the terms of the Medicine Lodge treaty of 1867, the federal government fixed the Arkansas river as the northern boundary of the Indian country for the tribes of the Southwestern plains and guaranteed that white hunters should not cross that stream. But they did.

In 1872 the mushroom town of Dodge City, Kan., sprang into existence and became the outfitting point and center of activity of the hide hunters who, with their big Sharps buffalo guns, were constantly invading the red man's country.

By the spring of 1874 the slaughter had become so great that the buffalo had been virtually wiped out near Dodge City. So A. C. Myers, who was in the general merchandise business in Dodge, organized an expedition to establish a trading post farther south where the hunters could get their supplies and to which they would bring their buffalo hides which Myers would freight back to the Kansas "hide capital." Forming a partnership with Fred Leonard and accompanied by a party of 20-odd frontiersmen, Myers set out for the forbidden Indian country.

Among the members of the party were Jim Hanrahan, an old buffalo hunter who was going along to open a saloon at the new trading post; Thomas O'Keefe, a blacksmith; and two young buffalo hunters destined for future fame—Billy Dixon and Bat Masterson. After a journey of 150 miles the expedition reached a spot on the south fork of the Canadian where stood the ruins of an old trading post, known as Adobe Walls, which had been built by William Bent and Ceran St. Vrain, some time before 1840. A mile or so farther on, in a broad valley where there was a pretty stream called East Adobe Walls creek, Myers and his companions unloaded their wagons and set about establishing the second Adobe Walls which was to become even more famous than the first.

Myers and Leonard built a picket house, 20 by 60 feet in size; Hanrahan put up a sod house, 25 by 60, and O'Keefe opened his blacksmith shop in a picket structure, 15 feet square. Myers and Leonard also built a stockade corral by setting big cottonwood logs on end in the ground. A short time later, Rath and Wright, leading merchants of Dodge City, decided to establish a branch store at Adobe Walls and built a sod house, 16 by 20 feet, leaving James Langton in charge of the new business there. To Adobe Walls also came William Olds and his wife to open a restaurant.

For several years the Indians had been watching with increasing alarm the wasteful slaughter of the buffalo by the white hunters. So when in the spring of 1874 a Comanche medicine man named Isatal announced that he had a new medicine which would enable them to

wipe out the white men who were exterminating the buffalo, he found the tribesmen ripe for such a crusade.

The first Indian leader to agree to help in this laudable enterprise was a chief of the Comanches, Quannah, the half-breed son of Cynthia Ann Parker, who as a little girl had been stolen from her home in Texas and had become the wife of the great Chief Peta Nocona. Then the medicine man "carried the pipe" to the Cheyennes, Arapahoes, Kiowas and Kiowa Apaches and they readily agreed to accompany their Comanche brethren.

So a great war party of between 600 and 700 mounted warriors set out for the buffalo hunters' camp and on the night of June 26 they camped about five or six miles from Adobe Walls, began painting themselves and their horses and preparing themselves for the charge against the hated white men. "Those men shall not fire a shot; we shall kill them all," was the promise of Isatal.

That night at Adobe Walls 28 men and one woman slept peacefully, little realizing that a storm of savage wrath was about to be hurled against them. In Hanrahan's saloon were Hanrahan, Bat Masterson, Mike Welch, Hiram Watson, Billy Ogg, James McKinley, "Bermuda" Carlisle, Billy Dixon and a man named Shepherd. In Myers and Leonard's store were Leonard, James Campbell, Edward Trevor, Frank Brown, Harry Armitage, Billy Tyler, "Old Man" Keeler, Mike McCabe, Henry Lease and two men known only as "Dutch Henry" and "Frenchy." In Rath and Wright's store were James Langton, George Eddy, Thomas O'Keefe, Sam Smith, Andrew Johnson and William Olds and his wife. Just outside the stockade two brothers named Shadler, who bore the nicknames of "Mexico Ike" and "Blue Bill" and who were engaged in freighting hides to Dodge City, were sleeping in their wagons with a big Newfoundland dog at their feet.

About two o'clock in the morning Shepherd and Mike Welch were awakened by a report that sounded like the crack of a rifle. They sprang up and discovered that the big cottonwood ridge pole which supported the dirt roof of Hanrahan's saloon had cracked and was about to allow the roof to collapse. Hastily awakening others in the place, they set to work repairing the roof and this commotion aroused others who fell to and assisted them.

Before going to sleep, Dixon and Hanrahan had prepared themselves for an early start in the morning for the buffalo hunting grounds to the northwest. By the time the repairs to the roof of the saloon were completed, the sky was growing red in the east. So Hanrahan proposed to Dixon that, instead of going back to bed, they get ready to start out as soon as it was light. To this Dixon agreed and as he started to get his horse he looked down the valley and there, through the dim light of the morning, he saw a sight which almost paralyzed him for a moment.

A dark mass of horsemen was moving swiftly up the valley and the next moment it had spread out like a fan and a mighty war-whoop shattered the stillness. Isatal was coming with his host of wild tribesmen to make good his promise to wipe out the buffalo hunters at Adobe Walls. Throwing his rifle to his shoulder, Dixon fired one shot, then turned and sped toward the Hanrahan saloon as the wild charge of the Indians swept down upon him. But this hasty warning was enough to bring the occupants of

the saloon, who were already awake and dressed, to the windows with their big buffalo guns in their hands.

"We were scarcely inside before the Indians had surrounded all the buildings and shot out every window pane," Billy Dixon says. "For the first half hour the Indians were reckless and daring enough to ride up and strike the doors with the butts of their guns." And Andrew Johnson has recorded how the savages backed their horses up against the doors of the buildings and tried to push them in, showing a willingness to fight at close quarters almost unparalleled in Indian warfare.

But the steady fire of the buffalo hunters soon discouraged this and after beating off several attacks, the white men had a chance to take stock of their losses. Strange to say, there were only three. The two Shadler boys, asleep in their wagon outside the stockade, had been killed and scalped. Their big Newfoundland dog had evidently put up a fight, for he was also killed and "scalped"—a piece of hide having been cut from his side. Billy Tyler, one of the defenders of the Leonard and Myers store, was killed early in the fighting and except for some minor wounds these were the only casualties.

Time after time the Indians charged, but as their ponies were knocked down by the heavy slugs of lead from the buffalo guns and more and more of their warriors were killed or wounded, it began to dawn upon them that Isatal had been a false prophet. So the charges ceased. During one of these lulls a young Comanche, gorgeously appareled in war bonnet and scalp shirt and mounted on a fine pony, made a lone charge toward the buildings in the face of a hot fire from the hunters. Riding up close to one of the buildings, he leaped from his pony, thrust a six-shooter through a port-hole and emptied it. He then attempted to retreat but was shot down. This daring warrior who had hoped to make a great name for himself by his lone charge was Pe-ah-rite, the son of Horseback, one of the leading chiefs of the Comanches.

By late afternoon the Indians had given up hope of wiping out the defenders of Adobe Walls and began to withdraw. After an anxious night of watchfulness the buffalo hunters discovered the next morning that only a few Indians were lingering around the place and they were soon driven off by some long distance shots. During the second day hunters from some of the outlying camps made their way unmolested into Adobe Walls and that night one of them, Henry Lease, was sent to Dodge City for help.

On the third day a party of about 15 Indians appeared on a high bluff east of Adobe Walls, but they were quickly dispersed by a shot from Billy Dixon's rifle which knocked one of the savages from his horse. It is this incident that gave rise to one of the oft-repeated myths about the Adobe Walls affair, different accounts of it placing the distance of the shot all the way from a mile to a mile and a half! By Dixon's own testimony "The distance was not far from three-fourths of a mile. . . . I was admittedly a good marksman, yet this was what might be called a 'scratch' shot."

More hunters came in on the third day and by the sixth day there were fully a hundred men gathered there. It is among these late-comers that so many of the "survivors" of later years were numbered. But by this time the danger from the Indians had passed. The red men had departed for a series of raids in Kansas and Texas which soon brought the military into the field and resulted in their eventual defeat. But before the affair at Adobe Walls ended there was one more tragedy, one which darkened the life of the brave woman defender, Mrs. Olds. On the fifth day her husband was coming down a ladder with a gun in his hand when it went off accidentally, and she rushed from an adjoining room in time to see his body roll from the ladder and crumple at her feet.

Today three monuments stand on the site of Adobe Walls. One is a small slab of granite which marks the grave of William Olds. Another marks the last resting place of the Shadler brothers. The third is a huge red granite monument which tells that "Here on June 27, 1874, about 700 picked warriors from the Comanche, Cheyenne and Kiowa Indian tribes were defeated by 28 brave frontiersmen" and it bears the names of the 28 who truly "fought at Adobe Walls."

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Dishes That "Go" Together

Variety of Combinations Apparently Are Just Meant to Complement; May Be Said to "Flatter" Each Other When So Served.

To enjoy the edible good things of life is one of the prerogatives of the epicure. What comprises these good things depends upon the taste of the person or of the family, and preferences. The real epicure is the person whose taste has had a high degree of education in foods. He knows how to discriminate in edibles, both as to quality and to combinations. I well remember hearing a Chinese gentleman of discernment say of one vegetable that "it flatters the meat." The homemaker who sets a good table learns what to serve so that one dish may "flatter" another. Let us mention, today, some dishes which "flatter" each other.

Cranberry sauce flatters chicken, caper sauce does the same to mutton, and apple sauce does to roast pork, duck and goose. Cabbage flatters boiled corn beef, baked macaroni and cheese do the same to roast beef, and in England Yorkshire pudding is the accepted accompaniment to beef. In Europe a salad is correct with chicken, goose, and other roast birds.

To Europeans a salad signifies dressed lettuce or other salad greens with, possibly, the addition of a little chopped beet root or tomato slices. Other salads they have, but these have special descriptive designations. Salad, as an accompaniment to flatter roast birds, is plain unless otherwise specified. The salad is served with the birds as naturally and regularly as are potatoes or other vegetables.

Turnip is a recognized accompaniment of corned beef. It is also excellent with lamb. Sweet potatoes are preferable to white with ham. Pineapple flatters ham. In India ripe pineapple slices are put on top of a slice of ham which is then baked, or cooked in a similar way. The juice extracted by the heat percolates through the meat, giving it a delicious flavor. Ham so cooked is reputed to be especially digestible.

Whipped cream flatters many desserts which are complete without this dainty addition. It goes with cold desserts especially, even topping some ice creams. Meringue belongs in the same class with whipped cream. It can be used interchangeably in many instances, although since it is more tasty when del-

cately browned, it belongs peculiarly to baked and even hot dishes. When on frozen desserts a hot iron is held above the piled meringue so that it, alone, gets the force of the intense heat. Ices with browned meringue tops are epicurean dishes.

A food which flatters another must be something apart from the dish itself. That is, it may be a separate food served as a complement to it, or it may be an addition to a dish itself which, however, could be served without it.

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Tree Transformation Is Puzzle to Scientists

It is one of the puzzles of science why some trees, long buried, turn to coal or oil, as they have done in Pennsylvania, and others change to stone as in the Far West.

For practical utilization, the oil and coal transformation means the most to the civilization of the United States. For scientific studies, however, the transformation of a tree or plant into several drops of oil ruins any chances of investigating the form or structure.

The remarkable preservation of California trees is accounted for, in part, by the complete freedom of their cells from decay fungus. This would be possible if they were buried while thoroughly wet.

The changes found in the wood were a slight degree of petrification—the turning to stone—, some crushing and a pronounced decrease in the soluble materials, cellulose and fibrous substance. In no case did the wood become coal-like or otherwise unrecognizable in its characteristics. Redwood, pine and cedar of Lebanon were included in the studies made.

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